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# BIG CITY ZULU

By  
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*Translated from the Swedish.*

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# BIG CITY ZULU

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*This book is dedicated, with admiration, to the  
many friends who, in spite of everything,  
still maintain patience, love, and  
a forgiving spirit.*



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## Foreword

THE EVENTS depicted in this book are not fictive. They have — unfortunately — taken place. Similar things are still happening in troubled South Africa. Names of people and places are, of course, not actual ones.

But friendships—reaching across the color line—such as the one between Örn and Hlongwane—are still possible, miraculously enough. They constitute a ray of hope in this country, torn by a conflict that is one of our time's most serious problems.

GUNNAR HELANDER



# CHAPTER

# 1

THE NATIVE reservation, or "location" as it is called in South Africa, lay about eight miles outside the city of Johannesburg. It was called Stoneville, and had a poor reputation in the country because of its squalor and criminality. One hundred thousand natives lived crowded into small ramshackle tin houses which perhaps could comfortably have accommodated one-seventh as many people. No white people lived there, except the manager for the location and a missionary, the latter being the headmaster of the boarding school for Negro boys. There was also a white police force, eighteen of them, who commuted to and from—preferably from—work, and took care of guard duty with the help of a lot of black constables. They did not live inside the native area, but rode the bus half an hour each day to work from the white section of the city. They would have preferred to drive their own cars as other white people did, but no one could afford it except "the station commander," who had an old 1937 model Chevrolet. It rattled and sputtered, looked uncared for and gaudy, and did not seem to

fit in with the commissioner's gold stripes, shiny boots, and frigidly solemn mien.

The police lived in two worlds—the swarming, dirty, and unfriendly native area, and the quiet, white suburb with its sunny and inviting gardens. The men looked different, depending upon which direction the bus was going. If they were on their way to the location, they looked tense and burdened. Their uniforms were buttoned, and the heavy pistols on their left hips seemed to be the symbol and center of their thoughts. The journey was to people of another race, who met them with open hate or sullen indifference. There they were supposed to enforce the laws of the reigning white man, and to mold a reluctant mass according to strangers' patterns. They were loyal in their work—like a prison keeper who gloomily does his duty without questioning whether or not the prisoners have been sentenced fairly—but they could not feel any real joy in their work. They saved their pleasure for the evenings, when they kept busy in their gardens or with carpentry or other hobbies, and when the atmosphere around them was friendly, near their wives, children, and respectable white neighbors. They did not have to act according to fixed political rules there, and they could give free reins to their imagination.

When the bus was going homeward, they looked like new people. Some had their coats unbuttoned; their faces looked more boyish. Some smoked and told stories, others slept with their caps pulled down over their eyes. Some talked about motors, some about building their homes, others about girls and football. No one talked about Negroes or the work at the loca-



tion. The door to the world of the blacks was locked tight as soon as they stepped into the bus. Ahead of them lay their own white world.

Slowly, day by day, the tension between the two racial areas, and the contrast between the atmosphere at home and at work, increased. From the capital city, Pretoria, there came a stream of determined decrees and racial laws. South Africa must be kept under the white man's dominion, and the boundary line between the races must be kept clear cut. Some blacks had forced their way up too near the Europeans and had acquired homes and land in the suburb, Sophiatown, which lay right next to the white city, Johannesburg, and which a foolish, liberal regime had opened up for them. Now they were going to lose their houses and title deeds and were to be forced out to the Negro area proper. Many Negroes had an education, and had become doctors and lawyers and newspapermen, and had begun to vie with the Europeans. There were natives who owned automobiles while some white people had to walk—an embarrassing situation. The white people who were just on the border line looked with astonishment, uneasiness, and anger, at how the natives straightened their backs, and began to ask why just *they* should serve and obey. These white people of the poorer class at the border line between black and white saw the danger more clearly than the others, and they supported devotedly the policy of the government. At the eleventh hour the Boers had gotten power, and proudly promised to prevent the advance of the servants. They did not do it hesitatingly, but from firm conviction in their high purpose. The

fort could still be saved and the walls still keep the races apart. They could be built higher. With the help of the law the natives would be prevented from competing with the Europeans. The natives would be permitted to live their own lives in isolated areas as long as the white people could live their own lives in peace and could rule untroubled. Maybe a few of the natives could be allowed to remain among the white people, if they served patiently and quietly like trusted slaves.

Further away from the boundary line between the area of the blacks and the whites the unrest was not so great. There were rich Europeans with well paid and contented servants who were too well off to want to make trouble and risk their positions. There the difference in culture and wealth was too great ever to be forgotten. And there were some Englishmen with that self-sufficient superiority and confidence which goes with the tradition of imperial rulers.

But the poorer white people did not feel like that. They were not too different from the blacks in education and ability. They feared competition. And now they had gotten power in the country, and the other white people had to follow along where they led. Their goal was clear and simple: no equality for Negroes. The blacks should be pushed back on the gleaming tracks on which they had begun to roll toward the white community. The ruling party had first resolutely put on the brakes, and then had gotten up enough steam in the white train to be able to push back the long black procession—backward in their development.

The police were the buffers, the point of contact be-

tween the two battling powers. And it was just there, in the contact point, that the pressure was felt the most. The police saw before them thousands of black faces which peered out of the windows of the guard's van, bitter or frustrated, tired or curious, servile or full of hate. And behind the police in the white man's engine, the government fed the fire with new laws and ideas, fumbled with faucets and levers, turned on large volumes of steam, and refused to look closer at the black train which opposed it. In the first-class cars away back from the rulers' engine, white people sat on comfortable sofas, read and smoked, and gave an occasional glance at the sunny landscape outside the window. Now and then someone muttered his dissatisfaction about the slow speed of the train, but no one bothered to put out his head and look at the row of bitter black faces who wanted to go the other way.

But the police saw and knew. And at all events the natives could spit as far as the buffers. The police perhaps also understood that some day it would not be possible to push the black train back any longer. Then the pressure of the steam in both engines would rise until there would be an explosion, and the men in both trains would tumble out over one another in confused and bloody hand-to-hand fighting.

The police could almost feel physically the pressure of their mission in the racial war. They went stiff and reserved when they were on duty, with chests forward and faces stern with responsibility. It was important never to let the native see their uneasiness.

Some of them were animated with a burning zeal.

They read the government's newspaper, and believed what was written there, and felt like the white man's furthest cultural outpost—as likely German officers once felt at Stalingrad and Tobruk. If it went wrong, then it went wrong, but Right was on their side and Doubt was Sin and treachery. South Africa must remain white. Such was the Creator's will. They marched ahead like good soldiers, serious, hard, stately. The muffled distrust or bitter shouts of the native masses did not bother them. Their conscience was clear.

These strong and dutiful police were the greatest danger to peace. The blacks could not understand them and believe in them. The uncompromising servants of the rulers would never laugh; they could never shrug their shoulders, and let a poor fellow escape his punishment. They were not unnecessarily severe, and they kept within the law. They were honorable and hardworking. But there was never any tolerance or humor or human doubt or sympathetic wondering whether the opponents perhaps might not be right some time. And the black leaders locked their souls in ever stronger hatred against the rulers.

This performance of duty to the ultimate, this atmosphere of victory or death—an inheritance from ancient Germany—was so completely strange to the Negroes—especially when it was applied toward aims which they neither could nor wanted to understand. The Negroes, to be sure, were created so differently—cheerful, inconsistent, lazy, and patient. But their souls could be tied up in hatred when someone came and wanted to drive them from house and home, only



because they happened to live too near the white people; or put them in prison because they went out on the street after some hour which the white people had decided upon; or force them to leave their work in the city and be harshly treated farm laborers in the country, because farm owners out there needed workers. They detested anything which smelled of inflexible order, principles, and severity.

There was also another kind of white policemen whom the Negroes understood better—men who accepted their task simply as their particular job—men who could laugh and tease and be careless on the job when no one was looking. Men who could flare up and scold a person and kick, and then let a poor fellow run away. The old Zulu chiefs had been like that. You would be left in peace, if you only kept them in good humor. Of course, they could be despotic and selfish—but that is, after all, perfectly human and understandable. But the gloomy, firmly principled Boer who saw to it that laws—strange, severe laws—were followed to the last clause—before them the souls of the Negroes closed up in distrust and dismay.

It was mostly simple white farmer boys who became policemen. It was not the high wages which drew them, but the job was steady and it fed a man, and the entrance requirements were few. It required no great intelligence or knowledge, though the training was severe. They were sent to police barracks and had to exercise like regular army recruits. It was implanted in them there not that they should become the servants of the public like good-natured English bobbies, but that they should teach people to obey.

They learned by the example of older comrades that in this work one spoke in commanding tones to Negroes. When they came out on their first job some of these good farmer boys found it hard to assume the right attitude. In the beginning they went patrolling among the Negroes with a grim expression like small boys trying not to weep. But with the years it settled into a sense of hardened superiority. They learned to be dependable machines, stiffened their bearing, and assumed a harsh voice as soon as a Negro was led in to be questioned. There was only one proper way to deal with the blacks, and the traditions of the police force allowed for no exceptions: no jovialities. The finished product in the policeman was most often dried up, pinched, and pompous.

At some time, when they went alone on a beat, they might treat themselves to a friendliness both hesitant and guilt conscious. Sometimes they could even relax and talk with a native as man to man, and feel that this, after all, was right. They never really became completely sold on the system's rightness—there were too many vague memories from their childhood to bother them. Far away in the sunny countryside there was a farm where the policeman had played as a child. And then it was not his white mother who followed him around on the farm and saw to it that he did not fall into the well. That responsibility was left to a Negro woman who probably also had her own black child to look after and loved both of them nearly as much. The first language he had learned was not Boer or English, but the natives' queer tongue. The black woman had taught him to play with oxen

and sheep of clay, had fed him and bathed him and had been his mother nearly the entire day. When he had tumbled and hurt himself, she had picked him up in her arms and had comforted him; and there he had been permitted to cry it out with a friendly black face leaning over him. If he felt sad or lonesome, he ran to black Nanny or Mary and knew perhaps that no one had such patience as she. Nerves or pedantry or cleanliness were not to be found there. There was only an age-old fund of primitive, oxlike calmness.

It was like that everywhere out in the country and occasionally in the cities—one of the many queer inconsistencies and breaches in the wall between races in South Africa.

But the boy had to soon relearn all this. When he began to grow old enough to understand what the grownups talked about, he heard that Negroes are cruel, deceitful, and undependable, that white people are always better than Negroes, and that it is a disgrace to take Negroes by the hand. Older playmates teased him if he fled to old black Nanny when he was sad and felt sick.

Nanny stood in the background, lonely and disappointed, and looked at the boy. But that is the way it would be at last, that she had known the whole time. And what else could she do except keep quiet, and learn to mind when the schoolboy sent her on errands, and pick up his little brother in her arms?

But deep down in his soul the schoolboy never learned to believe that it was really, really right—all that that their parents said about "Niggers."

In school and in the police force he was later

trained severely in racial pride and the idea of a ruling class; but the memory of childhood security in a black mother's arms never wholly faded away. And even though he became strict and superior toward the natives, and seldom said a good word about them, he himself in his turn left as the most natural thing in the world the dearest possession he had, his own child, in the care of a black woman. . . .

But at the police station no inconsistencies were to be observed. There he was the representative of the civilization that was to keep the blacks in their place. No one was able to enforce the observances of the race laws, if he did not surround his soul with hardness of heart and forced his thoughts to obey. And the Negroes answered with weary bitterness and sometimes with riots and stone throwing.

Above all, the policeman could not have any humor. Then all solemnity would be consumed.

The police station at the Stoneville location looked exactly as gloomy as police stations everywhere always look. It was, of course, absurd to demand hominess, curtains, flowers and pictures. It had to be a place where no one came willingly, either those arresting or those arrested. It should be a place untouched by a woman's hand, a place where hard men felt ill at ease. In a police station should be found at least a dusty writing desk with ink blots, shabby shelves with old papers, a wooden bench where ruffians should sit and be afraid, grim iron bars which marked the difference between the transgressors of the law and its guardians, as well as a sharp and disagreeable light in the ceiling with a white glass shade.



He who is led in there should be met with ill-omened and unfriendly atmosphere so that he immediately gets the right humility, feels like a villain, and does not try to deny things. This is, of course, of greatest importance in all countries, but especially in South Africa, where those arrested often are Negroes who do not at all want to understand that what they have done is criminal. The atmosphere in a police station should create the right background for the sergeant's admonitory address which is to make clear to the Negro how immeasurably badly he has behaved by being out on the street at a time when only white people are allowed to be out, or by not carrying on his person a Negro pass prescribed by the law. In a pleasant and friendly surrounding such a speech of admonition would sound silly.

The police station in Stoneville lived up to all these requirements. It was just as gloomy and unpleasant as the situation demanded.

In the cellar under the sentry office was the place the natives were held in custody. There were no individual cells. The prisoners had to lie together in four large rooms which in case of necessity could room thirty men each. Over week ends there were often more than that. The walls, floor, and ceiling were made of cement, and the only thing the room contained besides Negroes was blankets, one for every man. The prisoners were free to choose whether they wanted to use them as top covers or bedding as they lay on the cement floor.

The clients were not of the criminal type which one usually finds in other countries. The wheat and the

chaff were mixed up every which way. There were knife slashers, liquor smugglers, and burglars. There were dirty medicine men who tried to perform ritualistic murder in order to make witch medicine from parts of people's bodies. There were rioters, black nationalists, who openly defied the law by going into the white people's side of the gate in the post office or railroad station. But there was always a large group of decent black boys from the country who had come to the city to work, but had not kept track of the many laws which regulate the right of the Negro to live, work, and travel. They spouted and talked incessantly in there. The decent and the simple, who did not understand why they were arrested, described their fate with foreheads wrinkled and brooded: I came to the city because a white man wanted me in his factory; I walked on the street on my way to the location, and then a policeman came and wanted my papers, and then he said that there was one paper that was missing, and then he took me here and locked me up, and he did not say how long I would be here. I wonder what I did wrong. Let me see, I had papers to travel, of course, tax receipt, and the letter from the white man. And then I came to the city and walked on the street and then a police came along . . . I wonder what was wrong. . . .

Each one told his own story incessantly. The real convicts only listened and smiled scornfully and made a remark now and then. Keep pondering. A lot of good it does you. You will never understand anyway why you are here.

They themselves had stolen passports and falsified

papers, and they did not let themselves be caught for small passport irregularities. Some of them had even enough money to hire a lawyer, and had high hopes of getting out soon. They carefully looked over the newcomers, and chose one now and then who was worth initiating into the underworld's mysteries and could become a pupil for the profession of burglary. Everything was aimed at outwitting the white men and steal back a part of what was thought to have been taken from the natives. Even the worst crimes could be defended by the argument: Everything that is crazy in this country is really the fault of the white people. In this community of thieves it is no use following any laws. Everything is right in a crazy country. Hatred against the white people was used to defend everything evil, and simple souls from the countryside were poisoned and led astray in the prisons of the city. Since about three hundred were arrested every day there were many who were given a chance to be examined in this school of hostility to the community.

It was at the Stoneville police station that the white police constable Hendrik van Buren again met his old black playmate Jonathan Zondi.

The Zondi family had moved from Zululand to Johannesburg to work for the white people. The head of the family was forty-five-year-old Enoch Zondi, who was going to be a cleaner in an apothecary in the city. He was tall and thin as a fencepost, and was meek and flexible in his ways. He was suited to be a servant for the white people. He hardly had any capacity for

getting angry, his big wide mouth only wore an eternal grin, and if he was treated badly and unfairly by other people, his smile only became still more submissive or at the most embarrassed on their behalf. He also had a small mustache with unbelievably long tips which he twisted above the smile when he was in especial good humor or was praised. He was the kind of person who never has any enemies and who is forgotten completely about three days after his funeral. But his master in Zululand, the old despotic van Buren, used to hold him up as the only really good Zulu he knew, since other servants sooner or later left in anger to go to kinder neighbors. When van Buren praised him, Zondi's whole gangly frame squirmed in embarrassment and pleasure. The Boer would probably even have patted the good servant on the shoulder, if there had been any shoulders to pat.

Then there was his wife, Selina Zondi, irritable and worn out, and Jonathan, twenty-one years old, strong and simple with a wide open face and gleaming white teeth, and the youngest boy, fifteen-year-old Philemon, who was slight and crafty and not at all like his brother; and three small round-eyed and scared girls of the ages six to ten years. They were called Gladys, Beauty, and Vademecum. The last name the ambitious mother had seen in an advertisement and was instantly impressed with its charm.

The family had lived as farm servants on van Buren's farm for more than twenty years, and would have remained there forever if the head of the house, Zondi, had had his way. But his energetic wife and sons had urged him for years to give notice of re-



moval and go to the city. His wages on the farm for the whole family, including the younger children, was barely fifty crowns a month plus food and abuse. At least once a year the family would send father Zondi to give the notice, but he always came back without having had the courage to carry out his errand. At last a relative in the city had been able to secure work with good wages for Zondi in an apothecary, and then the decision could not be delayed any longer. After three days of nagging in the home, Zondi gave in and went to van Buren; and this time his wife and boys went along to give him moral support. During the quarrel that ensued Zondi wavered back and forth both bodily and spiritually, but the three strong wills behind him won out at last. He tilted backwards every time the Boer shouted at him, but was pulled together by his wife's cough. The Boer had to yield, but swore solemnly never to depend upon these lazy and thankless Negroes again. The family trailed off with Zondi in front and his wife and sons behind in order to prevent a relapse.

Van Buren's youngest son, Piet, had moved to Johannesburg several years ago to avoid his father's tyranny and had become a policeman. His closest playmate during his whole period of growing up had been the black boy, Jonathan Zondi, and together they had thought up tricks to cheat the bearded patriarch. The boys were of the same age, and it was Jonathan's mother who cared for them from morning to night and taught them to speak the native language. It was looked upon as perfectly proper in the countryside for white children to speak Zulu. Piet van Buren was

welcome to play in Zondi's straw hut. But Jonathan could never come farther than the kitchen in the van Buren house.

The boys tended cows together, did mischief to the neighbor's mower, rode on donkeys in the mountain, and had lots of fun in Africa's eternal summer sun. They had swimming races in the river and threw homemade spears at antelopes and jackals, of course never hitting anything. The most fun was one time when they found a mighty python which had swallowed a lamb and could hardly move. They beat the sluggish monster on the head and teased it to fury. At last they rolled a huge stone on the snake, which however, easily pushed it aside, and then they ran away and let the snake digest the lamb in peace.

They played together every day until bedtime, and every morning they met in the garden again as soon as the sun was up. On Sundays they were separated much against their wish. Then the van Buren family went to the Boer church where no black may set foot, and the Zondi family went to the mission church where a Swede preached in Zulu. Piet felt bashful and out of place among the white children at the church, and as soon as he came home he ran off to Zondi's hut.

Later on Piet was sent to a boarding school for white boys and learned, even though with effort, to look down upon the blacks, as is usual in South Africa, and to submit to the axiom that since some of the white people are better than some of the black, therefore all white people must be more privileged than all blacks. But this teaching was not so deep seated with him. When he came home on vacations he only kept

away from Jonathan a few days, and then suddenly they were playing together as formerly.

But still the difference between them increased. Piet went to school, of course, and learned new things and his clothes were good and free from holes. Jonathan was dressed in rags, and he could not go to school. After he became ten years old he had to work on the farm for van Buren. At last they were really good friends only when no one saw them. The atmosphere was not conducive to their friendship, and gradually they fell apart without either of them really being able to understand why it must be so.

One day they were going to meet in Stoneville as enemies. It often happens that way in South Africa.

When the Zondi family was going to move to the city, the magistrate made a mistake. It was perfectly proper to give Enoch Zondi permission to go. He had been called to the city by a white man. And his wife could also come along, and the younger children, Philemon, Beauty, Gladys, and Vademecum. But Jonathan was twenty-one years old and of age, and he could not be considered a member of the family, even though he lived at home. He should really have had a separate permission from the authorities in the city before he traveled over the city line. But the district magistrate knew the family, and thought it was obvious that they should be allowed to travel together, and he gave Jonathan a travel permit like the others. "But remember," he said when he gave the paper to Jonathan, "that you must immediately go to the passport office in the city and ask for permission to remain. You will

get it all right, if you tell them that you have always lived with your father and have no other home."

The magistrate's idea that one should not separate members of the family was, of course, wrong and unlawful, and he should have known better than to mingle sentiment with his treatment of Negroes. There it also did go wrong.

When the family early one morning arrived at the station in Johannesburg, Jonathan went to the passport office to get permission to live and work in the city, not expecting any harm. On the street outside the office there was already a line several hundred yards long of natives seeking permission to work. There were a few newcomers who stared in amazement at the big city's wonders, but most of them were black city dwellers who only wanted permission to change from one employer to another. Jonathan stood in line faithfully the whole day, without daring to speak to anyone or to leave his place to get food. The men behind him seemed to be some sort of simple Communists who now and then in mild eruptions complained about the white capitalistic state. They had nothing new or interesting to offer. They bore a weary hatred which simmered feebly and now and then boiled over. Jonathan almost fainted in the afternoon from tiredness and hunger, but he stayed on until five o'clock. Then there were only ten men ahead of him in the line, but it was also closing time and no more people were allowed in. The men behind him began to swear—more as a matter of duty and habit than because of astonishment and anger. Such was life in Johannesburg. Jonathan remained in the line a while,

unable to grasp that his waiting had been in vain. His wide open face showed dull wonderment. He just stayed like a patient and slow-witted ox which does not get around to go home when the work day is over.

At last he roused himself and turned to the fellows behind him.

"I saw you," he greeted them in Zulu fashion.

"We saw you."

"What shall I do now? I have no working permit. Do you think the police will get me, if I go home to my father?"

The fellows laughed.

"You can be sure of that. Hide in some backyard overnight, and then you can stand in line tomorrow, again and have just as much fun. Ha-ha!"

Jonathan was too tired to think. He only repeated: "Ha, in a backyard."

One of the fellows took pity on him and came nearer.

"Are you a newcomer here? Don't you know where to hide?"

"Na, I don't know anything. And I haven't eaten since yesterday."

"Come with us then. There is a cafe around the corner where you can buy bread, and then we will show you where you can sleep."

Jonathan trudged along after them, tired and thankful. A few blocks farther away they came to a lumber yard with a sign, "Trespassing not allowed," on the gate. A black night watch stood there on guard, with handcuffs at his belt and a club. After a period of parleying and frightened looks to the right and left, the night watch was persuaded to let Jonathan in and



showed him a big pile of sawdust where he could sleep overnight. He lay down without a word, looked for a while at the sky, and then slept like a log.

Along in the night he woke up, shivering with cold. Johannesburg is high above sea level, and the nights can be bitingly cold. He stumbled up, sneaked past the night watchman, who snored peacefully next to a pot of burning coal, and walked quickly toward the pass office. It was about three o'clock in the morning. Already there stood along the whole block a line of natives who were afraid of not reaching the office door before five o'clock the next afternoon. More and more people were added to the line behind him, and when the sun went up, hundreds of tired and frozen faces turned toward the light.

The second day was a little better than the first. Jonathan was no longer so afraid; he dared to talk with the men around him, and learned a lot about life in the city.

But at five minutes of five he had still just come up to the window of the passport office. An elderly white clerk looked questioningly at him over his glasses, took his Negro passport, his travel permit, and tax receipt, and listened impatiently to his explanations. Then he leaned back in his chair, assumed a superior air, and began to instruct Jonathan.

"Young man, you really shouldn't be here. That country magistrate should never have given you a travel permit. Anyhow, I might temper justice with mercy, and give you permission to stay. But now it is five o'clock and we close. You will have to come back tomorrow. Your passport can remain here. Good-by."

"Can't you give me the paper today?" he stammered meekly. "It isn't really five yet."

The clerk flared up, and said sharply:

"Are you cheeky too? I make the decisions here. Get out!"

A guard came threateningly close, and Jonathan ran out on the street as fast as he could. The door of the passport office was locked behind him.

Jonathan remained standing on the sidewalk in despair while thoughts slowly passed through his head.

What shall I do now? I go and lie down in the lumber yard, and stand in the line again in the early morning. And then I buy bread. And then I stand all day on the street again, and get as far as to the mean old man at the office. . . .

No, I can't do it. I can't do it again. I must sleep. I don't care about anything.

Mechanically he began to walk down the street, as if in a dream, and almost bumping into people.

He stopped and stood on a street corner and looked around absentmindedly, trying to gather his thoughts. He had to do something. If he went without a passport, he could be arrested at any time.

Then he looked over to the sidewalk on the other side of the street, and almost cried out with joy. There a black and a white policeman were patrolling. The white man, a stately, blond young man, was none other than his old friend and playmate, Piet van Buren. Jonathan rushed out on the street, was almost run over by a truck, and dashed up to Piet.

"Piet, do you recognize me! Thank God, you are here! Can you help me?"

Breathlessly, without giving Piet time to answer, he began to tell his story.

Piet became red in the face, and now and then looked askance at the black constable, to see how he reacted to Jonathan's familiarity. He himself had with difficulty controlled an impulse to shake hands and welcome enthusiastically his old playmate. But while Jonathan's story gushed forth, he found time to collect himself and compress his behavior within the iron-bound rules that he had learned. If he had only been alone with Jonathan, he would not have been so strict. But now he must maintain prestige in front of the native policeman. His face, which at first looked boyishly friendly, stiffened into a hard mask. He could, however, not really control his eyes. They flashed occasional glints of friendliness and sadness. But now it was necessary to act according to the law. No sentimentality.

Rule I. A Negro whom one meets on the street must be asked to show his passport. If he has none he shall be arrested.

He broke off Jonathan's story. Spoke in a commanding voice.

"May I see your passport and tax receipt?"

Jonathan stopped in amazement.

"But I said that they took the papers away from me at the office, and that they promised to give me working papers tomorrow. Piet, don't you recognize me?"

The white man took a deep breath and stared straight ahead.

Rule II. No intimacy between blacks and whites. Everything must go according to the policy of master-servant.

"Yes, of course, I recognize you. You are Jonathan Zondi. But there can be no first names used. You must call me 'Sir' when you talk to me."

The mask broke for a second, and he cast an unhappy sidelong glance at the black policeman.

Jonathan looked at him amazed.

"Yes, but Piet—Sir, I mean, you can help me, can't you? They are inhuman at the office. . . ."

The tall blond assumed a stiff bearing. His mouth formed into a thin line.

"You have no permission to stay. Then it is my duty to arrest you."

Jonathan became desperate, and looked around.

"Yes, but Piet, you know how it is. You can at least let me go in peace if you won't help me. Sir, I mean."

Piet looked straight ahead. He had a lump in his throat.

Rule III. A native who is arrested must be handcuffed.

But he could not force himself to do it. He nodded to the native constable.

"Put on the handcuffs."

It took a long time before Piet forgot the look Jonathan gave him. A child looks like that when he is punished without understanding why. A dog looks like that when he is kicked as he gladly runs to greet his master.

Piet turned around abruptly, and stared at the traf-

fic on the street. He lit a cigarette with shaking hands to calm himself.

Then he turned to the black constable. "Continue to patrol," he said in an unnecessarily hard tone. "I'll take this fellow to the police station."

Jonathan walked handcuffed beside him. His steps were tired and shuffling. Piet walked stiffly with his eyes straight ahead. He had thrown the cigarette away again.

Then Jonathan began to whine.

"But Piet, don't you remember when we played together? And when I carried you home when you sprained your foot? Don't you remember when we rolled the stone on the python?"

Piet did not answer. But he was thankful that Jonathan did not bother about the command to stop calling him by his first name.

Then Jonathan began with tearful voice on another line:

"How is your father, Piet, and your mother? And your sisters? Has Johanna finished school yet?"

Piet did not answer. He thought about what Captain Geldenhuys had said at the police school. Beware of the least trace of intimacy with persons of another race. If the line is once broken, one never knows how it will end.

"But Piet, if you shut me up, you can at least let my mother know where I am? She will be so sad if I don't come home. . . .

He looked childish as he pleaded with Piet.

The white man could not answer. Least of all to



this. Begin to talk about Selina on whose knees he had sat. . . . But he decided to let her know.

So they came to the Stoneville police station and went into the dusty and gloomy guard room. Piet stopped before the commissioner's desk and gave a stiff salute.

"I have arrested a native here, Sir. He has no permission to stay and no personal passport."

The commissioner nodded.

"All right, van Buren. Take him down to the prison, and we will take care of him later."

When Piet had taken Jonathan's handcuffs off and had locked the grilled door behind him, he went up the cellar stairs, passed the other constables without a greeting, and on into the toilet where he locked himself in. Then he sat down and began to cry.

He calmed down gradually when Right and Wrong cleared before him again. He had to be firm, manly. The holy principles of the white people's leadership can demand sacrifice. It is necessary not to give in to personal feelings. The blacks have to mind the white man's laws and be held in their place. He had acted absolutely right as a true son of South Africa.

He got up, blew his nose, and went out on the street, self-assured and determined. He had calmed his conscience. Almost.

Jonathan was sentenced to six months hard labor for vagrancy and for illegally staying in the city. The prison authorities "hired him out" to a farmer of poor reputation in the country who had difficulty in getting workers in any other way. He was kept locked in at night and had to work in the fields by day, sometimes

with beatings, when he was not industrious enough. After those six months he could not get permission to travel to the city to live with his family. He had no other choice but to stay with the farmer as a poorly paid worker.

Of the family who moved into Johannesburg now, Enoch Zondi, his wife, fifteen-year-old Philemon, and the three small girls remained.

The mill of the big city had ground its first round.

## CHAPTER

## 2

IT WAS the year 1954 in the Stoneville Negro location. Everything looked as usual—the same endless, muddy slums, the small windowless iron shacks, the same unemptied garbage pails in the street corners, the same apathetic faces in the doorways as in former years. The uninitiated would not have noticed that anything was brewing—an inactive volcano to be sure, looks just like one which is about to erupt—but those who were wise enough to listen could hear a muttering that grew and grew far down in the black depths. It developed into a crucial test of strength between the black and the white—the white people's government became ever more drastic and determined in its racial politics while the defense of the blacks hardened from sporadic outbursts of fury to a steady unyielding struggle. As usual, the natives in the locations of Johannesburg reacted purposefully much more quickly than the natives in the other part of the country. It was there that the center of black intelligence and native radicalism was located.

Those who hoped for compromise and co-operation

between the races were forced more and more into one of the two camps. In Johannesburg there were black teachers, preachers, doctors, draftsmen, clerks, who were in the habit of working together with white people. There were white missionaries, university students, soldiers from the war, and many others, who had lived in close contact with Negroes, and had found that they really were not so strange, and that it is possible to forget differences in the color of the skin when you work toward a common goal. All these people were pressed by the radicals from both sides—make up your minds on whose side you stand, do you want white or black dominion in this country? Wearily and persistently, but with growing despair in their hearts the moderates repeated their thesis: We don't want to hear this either-or, we want to forget the color of the skin; we only want to be human beings, and work for the best of the country. But the cry arose from both sides: These collaborators are cowardly traitors, they go the errands of the enemy, they want to keep back our black race; to prevent our white race from getting the power. And one after the other lost his grip, no longer had the strength to stand up against the pressure, and joined the ranks of those who were of his own color of skin. Among the most persistent collaborators were the white missionaries and the black pastors. They did not only have their own experiences to lean on and their feeling for that which is reasonable and fair, but they also had to answer to the Lord who created men to love one another, and who gave to all the same promise of life after death. The servants of the church in the area bordering be-

tween black and white could sometimes be forced to keep quiet, but they did not keep silent in bitterness or with loss of spirit. They kept silent with a smile and bided their time—and thought that the church would no doubt, be able to go against the current again—as it had during two thousand years.

There was a high white wall around the Edwaleni mission station, which lay at the edge of the location. The intention was that those who came inside the wall should forget the struggles outside, and live as well as they could in their own little republic of love and reason.

There was a missionary from Gothenburg who ruled inside—a short, energetic little fellow called Frederick Örn who had black hair which always stood on end.

The white wall encircled about eight acres of motley buildings. Like a compact core in the whole area, were a row of schoolhouses, homes for teachers, and barracks for black schoolboys, and spread out on the edges lay blacksmith shops, carpentry shops, clinic, and the home of the missionary. In the very center stood a white chapel with plastered walls which were badly cracked but which showed evidence of devout and consistent repair. It was not the kind of church which is built over a period of decades and lasts for hundreds of years. A real church should have heavy stone walls and a massive tower, it should stand secure and independent, and look down on the frail and temporal settlement around it with a mother's compas-



sion—while generations pass by and teachers change and human inventions sparkle a while and then die down. The stone walls should stand and think their own thoughts and listen without apprehension. The mission had not had time nor money to build such churches as yet. One had to build something by which the people in the location could benefit immediately; it was important to lose no time in the struggle for the Africans' souls. There was the gray despair of the slums, Communism's deadly influence on the spirit, and the destructive fire of race hatred to struggle against. Every day was the same in the dismal cycle of the life in the slums; but the sluggish whirlpool nevertheless had a definite goal—to drag people deeper and deeper down, until all happiness was stifled. In the midst of this the mission could not wait calmly. Before the roof was on and the windows in place, the church had been in use, and it had been full of people from the very first day. On Sundays and on a couple of evenings during the week the natives streamed in from the slum quarters until no more room was available; and every morning and afternoon it was bursting with boisterous schoolboys, who did not settle down until singing began. The rugs were worn, the benches were marked by boys' dirty trousers and the plaster on the walls was falling off here and there. The smell from the slum area had indissolubly been mixed into the building—the stench of coal smoke and overcrowding, of sweat and clothes that were never changed. But farthest forward the sanctuary railing barely kept the slums at a distance. Within was the altar with resplendent white or green cloth, and its flowers and

candles and crucifix—a calm and clean resting place for the eyes.

Missionary Örn always cast a troubled glance at the chapel when he went by. It was not as it should be. It barely held its head above water. The church had assumed too much of the need, and then had not had the strength to hold itself high enough above the surface. Black fingers had convulsively grasped firm hold of the rescuer, and had almost dragged him down into the depths.

But, at any rate, the church stood there, right in the middle of the settlement, and did its work. Perhaps some day they could afford to build a cathedral which would be large enough for all the people and would offer their souls peace and purity.

The church belfry was only a few meters higher than the roof and barely held the heavy bell. It leaned alarmingly to one side and the roof had begun to give way. But the bell had to ring every day. They took the risk. There was no time to lose.

The church could have drawn itself aristocratically aside, could have had a small, pleasant, and protected place further away from the slum quarters, and only taken upon itself such as lay within the bounds of its resources. But it had thrown itself right into the struggle and the dirt, and there it would stand or fall.

There was one thing that could not be abandoned—the high white wall around the mission station. Missionary Örn considered it as a real spiritual necessity to keep it in condition—like a last dam. People scribbled on it, stained it, and broke pieces out of the top of it. But an old Christian Negro constantly kept re-

pairing it and whitewashing it. When he had gotten around the wall he would have to begin again—year after year, round upon round. Without the wall, the mission station would have felt surrendered to the despair of the slums.

The mission station had its own melody, slightly different on Sundays from weekdays. Around the clock one heard in the background the dull thud of the kerosene motor in the little electric power station beside the blacksmith shop. No one paid any attention to the noise except when it ceased. Then missionary Örn left the schoolroom or office and rushed to the workshop. When the thud was heard again, he came out with rolled up sleeves and oily hands, straightened up, and felt that the pulse of the place had begun to beat again.

There was also the hum from the schoolrooms which rose and fell, and at last swelled into a hurricane of noise, when the windows and doors were opened, and boys streamed out into the sunshine.

The sound of hammering on iron could also be heard from the blacksmith shop, where older boys learned the strange skills of the white people, and from the bandsaw's persistent song in the carpenter shop. It sounded as when a bee infuriates itself more and more to a sharp treble, and then suddenly drops off to an indolent humming.

From the lawn in front of the clinic rose the sound of waiting patients, mostly mothers and children, who wanted to talk with the black nurse or with the visiting native doctor. Some lay in the grass quiet and

anxious, but most of them did like waiting patients the world over—scared one another with sensational and detailed stories of pain. People with all imaginable sicknesses were spread out on the lawn. There were men and women with rasping TB coughs or syphilis sores around their mouths, but most of all there were an endless number of undernourished children with spindly legs and with stomachs swollen from undigestible food and sometimes with their black hair become lighter in color from starvation. They did not have much of a chance—the death rate was ten times greater among native children than among the white children in South Africa—but now and then a lucky native mother was sent home from the clinic with a prolonged period of grace for her little one. Often behind the clinic's white painted windows was heard a cry from some black urchin who was having an injection and reassuring voices from the nurse and the doctor. There they worked from morning till night, and not before it grew dark and the chilliness came creeping between the trees, did the crowd on the lawn thin out. Then the only sound was the sighing of the night wind in the palms; but the clinic and the trampled lawn lay waiting for the next day's responsibilities.

In the afternoon when school was out, the noise, which had been shut up inside the schoolrooms and schoolyard, spread out over the whole area, to the sports field, to the groves, and to the barracks. Down-trodden grass slopes swarmed with boys who studied, played marbles, or sewed buttons on their khaki trousers. Örn and a few native teachers walked around

and kept watch, so that the boys did not sneak out to the location with its temptations, or that the gangs from outside did not force their way inside the walls. During free periods the football field was the center of the noise, with wild cries and shouts from kinky-haired African boys—and from the three towheaded Swedish Örn boys.

But the sound which in the end dominated, and came from the core of the station, was the bell ringing from the chapel. A schoolboy stood waiting with an old alarm clock in his hand, and when it was the right time he pulled the rope, and the roof began to creak and shake, and the tones of the bells rolled out to the slum area in an eager and motherly way. Then all work and play stopped, and the boys came streaming from all sides out of houses and groves up to the center, as if drawn by a magnet. They ran and stumbled over the threshold, but the noise diminished when they took their places—up to the time their song broke out like an unleashed storm, and pushed its way through the windows out over the whole area. Then came the only quiet period of the day, when the evening prayer was read, and all thoughts were drawn together toward one single spot, and one single voice spoke—at the altar.

During that moment Örn thought it was great to be alive. He stood there in his white alb by the candles and flowers on the altar, with the sea of attentive black faces before him. Everything was gathering into one single grip, and the large, noisy, restless mission station had found peace.

In the dusk of evening, even more than during the



day, it lay like a shining oasis in the location. It sloped upward toward the center, and its lights shone through all the windows over the white wall—but outside the wall the darkness lay impenetrable. There were no street lights in the slums, only a fluttering candlelight shimmered here and there or the glitter from a coal fire through an open door. One imagined rather than saw black faces in the darkness of the alleys and saw eyes which looked wonderingly toward the circle of light from the mission station.

The evenings were the worst to endure in Stoneville location. The shacks could just be used to sleep in and of the joy of home there could not be any thought. There was no light, nothing to do, in most of the houses no place to sit, or to lie decently. The natives from the country were used to straw huts which did not cost a penny to build and which could be made as large and roomy as one wished. Out there it was at least one hundred yards to the next kraal, and you could spread out as you wished on the grass veld. The Negro children in the country tended the cows, rode on donkeys, splashed in the river, and lived a comparatively healthy life. But there were no opportunities to earn enough—you could not live on fresh air and sun and a little patch of land. You had to have money for taxes and clothes, blankets and food. There was no other way but for the family support to travel to the city and take a job in some factory or mine. The family often had to stay in the country. Perhaps he succeeded—in a more or less lawful way—in getting

permission to work and get a decent job, but then he got used to the city life, and then there was never more talk about moving back to the country. He might possibly go home for a couple of weeks every third year, to impregnate his wife or to sell his daughter as a bride. But most often he was lost to the country and the family. His wife had to care for the children and the patch of land as best she could. He probably sent a little money home each month, at least in the beginning, provided that he did not meet other women who took his money, or began to drink home-brew, or found some other way to get rid of his small wages, or was just too lazy to go to the post office. There were ten chances to one that the sending of money from the city would shrink and at last completely stop. Then there was hunger and sorrow in the kraal out in the country. The children got no clothes, and they had to stop going to school. The wife washed for white farmers, picked peanuts, or perhaps pilfered what she could get hold of from the neighbors. There was some truth in the old saying that the natives in the country lived by stealing from one another.

But the husband in the city had enough to eat, and surely a bit left over for beer or home-brew which was sold in backyards and prepared with kaffircorn, yeast, sugar, rotten meat, and a few pinches of carbide. But his wages had not stretched to build a house, of course—the kind of houses that are built in the city of brick and stone and cement. If he were energetic, he would day after day have perserveringly begged or stolen a piece of corrugated iron, a bag, a piece of wood or cardboard, and put together something which

looked like a big, poor doghouse, or a middle-sized playhouse and moved in there, preferably with a couple of roomers.

The city council did not provide street lights and sewers and asphalt roads in the location. It looked mostly like a huge temporary emergency area of the kind people put up when they are driven from their homes by floods or earthquakes. But the need was permanent here, and accepted, and the authorities took money from the Negro for the land on which he put up his shack—ten shillings per month. It was necessary for him to save on space—Africa's endless space—and his little house stood wall to wall with the next shack. He had to manage without windows and chimney, but a door he must have. The furniture consisted in most cases of a couple of chairs, a table and a bed, where he himself slept at night. The roomers had to sleep under the bed or in other places on the dirt floor. It was not possible to keep clean in the location's cabins, or to sit and read, or spread out and feel at home. Only tiredness found room, and dirt, vermin and wickedness, and at times a nauseated and uncomfortable lust.

If the newcomer was a timid or phlegmatic type, he would not even try to build a house himself. He would only rent from some other Negro and get enough room for his suitcase and for himself in a prone position on the floor.

When he was through with his work at the factory in town at five o'clock, he most often had to stand in line an hour or two before he could get on a bus out to the Stoneville location. He could not sleep in the factory

area or in the white people's part of the city. Such was the law. When he finally came to Stoneville it was already dark and it was necessary to grope his way home through dark alleys. Perhaps he would stop along the way with some friend who sold illegal home-brew.

There was something pathetic about these long queues waiting for the bus every evening in the factory area and every morning in the location. The transport companies did not bother to get more buses just for morning and evening traffic. The natives had no choice but to stand and wait no matter how long. The lines of tired workers wound around two or three blocks at bus stations. Behind the workers lay a long workday in the factory and before them at the end of the trip lay a dark and hopeless location. That combination had gradually broken jolly and patient Africans, and had made them downhearted, irritated, and bitter. At the end of their day's work no relaxation nor friendly home awaited them. Instead they faced the day's worst test. The black faces did not smile in the lines. They only stared ahead of them, without hope and without happiness. On a sunny, grassy hillside out in the country they would have jabbered and talked and enjoyed life. But here on the asphalt, in the shadow of the stone houses, happiness withered and died. They stood unnaturally quiet—like a sick ox that turns his back to the rest of the herd. They perhaps bore up under a vague hope that someone would some day come and improve things for them. The white people were, of course, mighty and clever, they could if they only would. But perhaps they did

not want to. They had become accustomed to riding past the black queues, and looking at them without really seeing them.

When the Negroes had boarded the buses, the crowd became unbearable. Conversation began, but it was the young rowdies who dominated. They were men who had not done an honest day's work in the city, but only used the buses as a hunting ground. They talked and shouted to one another across the bus, in the city's monstrous gangster slang, mostly a combination of Basuto native speech and Boer language. There was not much variation in the topics of conversation—it was mostly about women and home-brew and weapons. They were not to be fooled with, these native "tsotsis," gangsters. They usually had a home-made knife in their sleeve or a long screwdriver with a sharpened tip and some perhaps had a stolen revolver in their pockets. Their eyes roamed around in the bus to choose a suitable victim for the evening. The one who was selected met his fate in the press and the darkness at the bus terminal. When the crowd scattered he probably was left lying on the ground while the other passengers hurried away, afraid of being mixed up with it, and forced to give evidence. It was, of course, the pay envelope which was the most desirable booty, but they also took clothes and passports. Permission to work and other papers were hard to get, and could be sold on the black market for amazing prices. But then the real owner must first of all be disposed of.

The natives were much more afraid of their own kinsmen than they were of Europeans. Indeed, the



white people also took what the black people had, but in a quieter way, by lawful means, and on a longer range. But the risks of being robbed or beaten by the native "tsotsis" were a reality every day and night. The decent, hard-working natives crowded together in the buses, quiet and scared, and only hoped that their hour had not yet come. These eternal bus trips in fear and crowded condition provided the framework of their day, and shut out the horizon; they raised dark walls against hope.

During the daytime, when the husbands were not home, Stoneville location looked a little friendlier. It was not so crowded and noisy then, and one could walk around in the alleys without the risk of being killed. Many women also went to the city to do day-work, and so there were mostly children who roamed around on the streets, or old people who sat on doorsteps and waited. If there had not been people sitting in the doorways, you would have thought you were only looking at vast, queer clusters of henhouses or pigsties or dilapidated sheds. It looked like a confused dream, but it was not frightening. The people you found there did not look cheerless or hateful. You could walk around in muddy alleys and be met with friendly faces and happy greetings. The children were born there, and knew no other world. They groveled in the rubbish piles, splashed in puddles, and chattered and shouted, like ducklings in a farmyard pool. Now and then a little playmate disappeared, it is true, carried off by TB or undernourishment, but he was soon forgotten.

Some children were completely naked, but most of

them wore a pair of pants or a shirt which came down to the stomach. Those who had the good fortune to get into a school were the best dressed. They were looked upon with envy and felt like a superior class. The difference was marked by the fact that they had both shirt and trousers or skirt and, most important of all, they had a slate which they liked to carry around unnecessarily in the afternoons as a kind of symbol of learning. The government had erected a long, low brick building which held a small percent of the school children, but most of them went to schools built by the mission. They had something interesting to do in school, and did not have to be in the alleys at least for some hours of the day. To be able to read and write was also a key to better paid jobs. But the schools were overcrowded, with at least seventy to eighty children per teacher, and most of the children had to remain outside in the slums.

The location lay large, gray, and dirty during the day, simmering with quiet life. But at dusk, when people streamed homeward, it received a powerful injection of wickedness, bitterness, drinking, and strife. The hooligans then gathered on the street corners, and anxious workers hurried home to shut themselves up in shacks, to crowd and to quarrel, and to wait for the next day. The adults had been trained in factories and waiting lines and prisons, and they had long ago lost their childish gaiety. The big city's location took charge of them, and molded them relentlessly after its own pattern.

When the Zondi family, a few years earlier moved to the city, they had hoped to get a better life than on the Boer farm. The only thing they knew when they went to Johannesburg was the fact that the wages would be better than before. But they had not taken into account the Stoneville location. There they had to crowd into a little house not much bigger than a tool shed, where the kitchen was only a tin can outside the door. It had been a hard blow for them when the oldest boy disappeared. Mother Selina had lamented day after day; but then the tall, blond policeman had come, a little ashamed, and had related that Jonathan was alive and that perhaps some day he would be able to come home. Then she had calmed down. After all, there was possibly a little hope.

With her usual energy she had during the first days gone around and looked and puttered to see how the house could be decorated and improved. She had always dreamed about getting away from the primitive straw huts, and get a house like the white people with flowers in the garden and curtains in the windows and real beds and a table. But her energy bounced against a hard wall. It was impossible to plant flowers. The house they rented stood only a few feet from the alley, and there was no fence to protect it from tramping feet. The alley was about nine feet wide and full of holes and stones, and when it rained the top layer of mud and garbage moved slowly toward the location's lowest point.

Outside the house there was nothing to be done. The best thing to do was to close the door and isolate yourself from that side. But if you closed the door,

then there was no light inside. There were no windows of course. The walls were of rusty iron, nailed onto wooden posts which were put down in the ground, and the house was only six feet wide on the street side and twelve feet long. When the sun poured down, the iron became burning hot and it was not possible to sit inside, in any case not with the door closed. At night—with the highland's quick changes of temperature—it could get biting cold, and then the wind whistled through joints and nail holes. It never got really unbearably cold, however, for the crowd in there at night, except right by the walls.

There was only one bed in the room, which was included in the rental. Father and Mother Zondi lay there. The son lay under the bed, and the three girls on the rest of the floor. There was no more room. A cat or two might possibly have found room. The family's two suitcases hung on nails in the ceiling, in order not to take up floor space. When it rained the water seeped irresistably in after a while under the iron on the street side and the earthen floor became damp and soft. Then one or two of the little girls moved up into the bed, and then there was no sleep for the parents, only an irritating wait for morning. Father Zondi was patient as always, and never said a word, but Selina got angry sometimes and slapped a girl who had gone to sleep and had poked her elbow into her face. When at last the morning came and it still rained, you had to take the coal tin and cook porridge inside in the shack's driest corner. Then they groped and found their way in the smoke, and ate their breakfast sitting on the edge of the bed or stand-

ing. They did not have to bother with dressing. Day and night they wore the same clothes, and as time went on they gave off an increasingly sharper stench of smoke and sweat.

Therefore Mother Zondi could not put up curtains, and not even have a table with tablecloths and vases. That dream had to be forgotten. It was only to try to get through the days and nights, and hope for better times. She would go to the doorway, stand there and look around, and loudly admonish the girls who played in the alley. Then she would exchange a few words with the neighborhood women, but when the longing to be alone became too strong, she would go into the house again. It was almost dark in there, and there was not much to keep her restless hands busy. Soon she would be in the door again and look around, until the nearness of the neighbors became unbearable, and she must hide in the house. Back and forth, day after day, until gradually her ambition was worn down to a decrepit remnant, crushed and broken in pieces between confining walls.

Outside the location there lay about sixty miles of grass plains, waiting and empty but it was not intended that Negroes should be allowed to live there.

She had her three girls to look after, of course, but since she herself could neither read nor write, she did not have much to teach them. There remained only a mother's anxious and useless warnings.

Sometimes she locked the door and went out on a restless wandering, up and down the streets searching—like a fox that seeks a protected lair. But all streets, houses, and people in Stoneville looked the



same. There was nothing to do but hurry home again—as though she were anxious to get to an important appointment and open the door to the emptiness of the shack, until she could not bear the emptiness any longer, and then out to the doorway again.

The first years she had tried to keep the home neat. She swept the floor, she cleaned their only kettle, and patched the ragged edges of the blankets and the holes in the family's mattress. But gradually she learned that it would be easier for her to live if she gave in, stopped beating her head against reality's hard walls, simply let the dirt gather and the blankets go to pieces, and sit on the threshold and stare into space. The neighbor's wife sold strong home-brewed beer, and that was so good to deaden one's senses; it helped the days go by.

The first week she had gone around to all the mission schools in the location and tried to get her girls into one. But they were filled everywhere—the black teachers had taken in a few more now and then, until the schools were packed like the buses, and the teaching bordered on chaos. The girls had to go home again and play in the alley in front of the house, and only wait for the time when they would become old enough to work for a white family.

Father Enoch Zondi could not do more for his children than he did. He earned money for food and rent, and sometimes it stretched for a dress. But he had no initiative of his own. When something was to be decided he always looked to Selina with an expression of blank submission. He had become more servile and compliant in the city than ever before. He was sent

here and there by everyone at the apothecary, where he was a cleaner, and by his wife, and by almost anyone else.

Selina had longed for the city, away from the lazy and primitive life in the country. But the only difference was that they exchanged straw for sheet metal and spaciousness for congestion. She bitterly regretted the exchange.

Her pride and joy was her son, Philemon. He had been admitted to the boys' school at Örn's mission station. Selina belonged to the Swedish mission, and on one of the first Sundays she had gone to Edwaleni, leading the whole family like a determined general. It had felt like a home-coming to her to go in through the gates. Inside the white walls were grass and trees, just as on the farm, and the same language was heard as at home in Zululand. All imaginable Negro languages mixed together were spoken in the location—Sesutho, Xosa, Karanga, Swa, Venda, Swazi, Owambo and several others—and both family customs and pride died out there. But the Swedish mission had its headquarters in the land of the Zulus, and kept mostly to the Zulu language which, furthermore, was *lingua franca*, and was understood by the majority. It had a special ring and proud traditions from the time when Zululand was a free kingdom and the Zulu armies were feared in the whole of South Africa. The Zulu language was used at church, in school, and in all that took place in the Edwaleni mission. That belonged to sound custom, and helped to maintain style and pride.

The Zondi family became radiant as they came inside the walls and heard their own language well

spoken. Something of the homeless brooded over the mixed Negro lingo of the slums.

It was by the skin of their teeth that they got into the church. It was filled to the last seat, and people even crowded up front in the chancel, eager to get away from the gloominess of the location, and be able for a few minutes to dream that they were in a kingdom which was not of this world.

The service had been in progress quite a good while when they came in. The missionary sat on a stool up front in the sanctuary with curly-headed Negro children around his feet, and in the pulpit stood a black preacher, Pika Hlongwane. He had a broad, flat face, and was unusually black.

The sermon came thundering like a dark, rapid stream. Hlongwane clasped the edge of the pulpit with both hands, and never gesticulated or embellished his sermon with dramatic pauses or small talk or anecdotes, as native speakers usually do. The subject was important, and the time short. He explained his text boldly, seriously, energetically, as if it were his last chance to talk to the congregation. . . .

"You come from hunger, and you come from fear. The smoke lies thick over the location, and you don't see the sky. Your children become lost before your eyes. I know your conditions. You live in hatred against one another and against the white people, and Satan grabs hold of you and wants to drag you down into the dirt. You fall sometimes and do things which you yourselves hate. You drink and are desperate, and think it is just as well to surrender all honor and decency and hide in the slough. And the joy you get is

bitter and unclean. But don't be blind, don't be blind! There is a heaven, there is a life after this! There is something other than the wretchedness you live in, something that is worth living for. Lift up your heads and look upward, toward God's kingdom. Satan grabs you by the neck and wants to force you to look downward and become desperate and torment each other. But shake off his grip and look upward! Open your clenched fists and fold them in prayer. Plant the flower of righteousness right in the dirt. Speak the truth and help one another. Check your lusts and swallow your hate. You don't need to go to a shebeen and get drunk and wild just because you are sad and tired. You are not forced to seduce your neighbor's wife because you dwell beside her on the floor where you rent. It is not necessary to hate your black brother who is a policeman for the white people, and who arrests you by a law which you do not understand. He is also a poor person who needs friendliness. God has created us all as brothers, white or black. Be glad in the midst of sorrow and dirt, and love your neighbor who tortures you and crowds you. It is possible to be friendly and love and help right in the middle of Stoneville location! Don't be blind! There is another world to which you can come some day. This life is only a time of preparation. It should not be wasted. Lift up your heads. The sun is there behind the smoke and the clouds. You don't see it, but it is there. . . ."

He continued a long while on the same theme, eagerly and penetratingly, and wrestled with the thoughts of the audience while his eyes gazed over the

rows of benches. Then he looked down and drew in his breath and ended abruptly with "Amen." While they sang a hymn he went out in the sacristy, followed by Örn who went up to him and took his hand.

"Thank you, Hlongwane, that's how it should be done," he whispered.

The native wiped the perspiration from his forehead and ran his handkerchief around his neck along the collar. He looked at Örn with a little smile.

"So you think so. I wondered if you would think it was the kind of sermon that is opium for the people."

Örn laughed quietly and patted him on his back.

"Oh, well, it happens, of course, that poor wretches get opium in hospitals sometimes. But your sermon was more of a blast than a narcotic. And even if it had been a narcotic, you can't begrudge them that sometimes, too. We don't have to be afraid of that."

Hlongwane thought a minute. Then he brightened up and nodded.

"Perhaps. That is a thought, too. Only so we help someone."

Örn went to open a window. It was oppressively hot.

"Oh, yes," he said, "the congregation listened. There was silence in the church. And it was God's word you preached, and not your own ideas."

Hlongwane nodded again and went back into the church to take care of the liturgy. He had to crowd his way forward step by step through the sanctuary, and climb over native children who sat on the floor. The hymn was simply deafening. Children who did not know the words sang along to their hearts' content.



The church was a stormy sea of living faces and sounds.

After the final hymn Selina went with her family to the door of the sacristy and waited for Örn. The small girls went last, close to one another. They looked longingly toward the athletic field, where the schoolboys had already begun to play and crowd. The missionary remained a long time in the sacristy, counted the collection, and talked with Pastor Hlongwane and the churchwardens. When he came down the steps, Selina sent her husband forward to greet him. She would soon take control of the conversation, but for the sake of respectability one at least had to pretend that the husband was the head of the family.

Örn remained standing on the lowest step. He was a little conscious of his short stature, and did not especially want to look up when he talked with taller men. He preferred to sit when he talked with people. In other respects he did not look at all timid. With his brown, lively eyes, his wide chin and high forehead, he reminded one a little of Mussolini—a friendlier and more humane copy of Il Duce. His black forelock stood up like a frame behind the crown of his head. He was dressed in a worn black tail coat and trousers with baggy knees.

“Saubona, umfundisi, we saw you, pastor,” Zondi greeted him and stretched his hand straight up in Zulu fashion. He had understood that real Zulu customs were respected inside the mission’s walls.

“Saubona, Mnumzane, we saw you, O squire,” answered Örn. “Nisaphila, you are still in good health?”

"Sisekhona, we are still living. Singezwa, let us hear the same from you."

"Sisakhokhoba, we still stumble along," answered Örn in the usual manner.

With that Selina thought her man had done enough. She stepped forward and took command.

"Umfundisi! I know that you are Pastor Örn who formerly was at Ekuhlengeni mission station in Zululand. We also belong to the Swedish mission, and we have just come to the city. I do not want to waste your time, I only want to ask you for one thing—Umfundisi, take care of our boy, Philemon. We can't get him into any school."

She took the boy's arm, hissed under her breath at him to take off his cap, and pushed him forward for the missionary to inspect.

Örn looked a little casually at Philemon. It did not matter much what kind of boy he was. The school was to help all kinds of boys from the slum area, not to reward the well-behaved. But then, there was no room for him.

"Saubona, Philemon," he greeted him.

"Saubona, umfundisi," the boy answered.

"How old are you?"

"Fifteen years."

It was Selina who answered this time. She took no risks when it came to such an important interview.

Örn cast a curious glance at her, and tried to talk with the boy again.

"How many years have you been in school before?"

"Five years," answered Selina. "Two years preparatory, and then three years in Mahlombini mission

school. Then he had to stop because the Boer wanted him to work." It was apparently impossible to get to talk to the boy directly. Örn gave up, and turned to an imaginary person somewhere between the mother and son, glanced at one and then at the other. He had now stepped down from the stair. Neither the woman nor the boy was tall enough to look down at him.

"And you want to come to school here?"

"Yes, umfundisi, he wants to. It is terrible in the location. It is so crowded in the house, and he has no good friends to play with. It will never go well with him, if you do not take care of him. I thought that since we belong to your mission. . . ."

Örn sighed heavily.

"Yes, yes, Mother Zondi, I know, I know. I believe all you say. It is the same story every day. Yesterday three came whom I had to refuse. I *have* to say no. The schoolrooms are overcrowded, and there is not a bed vacant in the barracks. If I take in too many, it will be just as crowded as in the location, and then we can't keep order. And then there is no purpose to the whole mission station."

Selina hung onto him with her eyes.

"But umfundisi, only this boy. It is so hard for us at home."

Örn shook his head.

"I can't, I can't. There are many ahead of him whom I have put on the waiting list, and they must come first in any case. I can add his name, but there isn't much hope."

Selina hung on like a leech.

"But what shall we do with him, umfundisi? You

surely will help him? We belong to your church! The police have taken his brother, and the girls here can't get into any school."

Örn held his hands behind his back, squeezed one wrist tightly and, looked down at the ground. It was torture to go through this day after day, to be forced to refuse the members of his own congregation. But you had to draw the line somewhere, otherwise the mission station would sink down into the same chaos as the location.

A discreet cough was heard from the steps of the sacristy. Pastor Pika Hlongwane had stood up there and heard the conversation, quiet as a post. His look was wide awake and interested. He had noticed the mother, and had seen that there was something special about her, this insistence, this fearlessness. Most of the Zulu women would have given up at the very beginning of the conversation. And the boy looked like her—slender and muscular with light brown, triangular face with high cheek bones and deep-lying, intensive eyes. There was certainly the same grit in him. You could make something of him in time. He must not be lost.

Hlongwane went down the steps. His wide ebony face looked decided.

"Excuse me, umfundisi Örn, but I think we shall have to take this boy."

Örn turned his head and looked at his native colleague with a puzzled and uncertain expression. He still held his tense hands behind his back. It was hard enough to do one's duty without having one's assistant add to the burden.

"How so?" he asked somewhat curtly.

"Can I speak to you a minute?" continued Hlongwane without looking at Örn.

His eyes went from mother to son. Selina greeted the new ally with a spontaneous bow, and afterwards turned all her attention toward him.

Örn became a little irritated. Hlongwane and he were, of course, the best of friends, and the native dominated most of what happened at the station—he was so stately and strong and sure of himself. But Örn did not want it completely forgotten that he was the boss, at least it ought to appear that way.

Both pastors turned their backs on the Zondi family and wandered along the garden path in lively discussion. Hlongwane walked calm and dignified with his eyes straight ahead, but Örn gesticulated and looked eagerly and uncertainly up at him.

"Well, why should we take just this boy? You know of course that there isn't any room."

"Yes, but I can see that there is something special about this boy. I feel that we must take care of him."

Hlongwane spoke slowly and in a monotonous tone with the deep voice which comes from another sort of instrument than white men's voices.

"Is that the only reason?" replied Örn. "You have said that several times before. It is your fault that the school is already so filled. You see something special in one after the other. I have given in to your ideas many times before."

He looked appealingly at Hlongwane. He really longed to be contradicted. He himself had only his common simple Swedish sense to depend on, but he



had great respect for Hlongwane's intuition and ability to decide for the best. The native pastor knew his people. But it was a little troublesome to plan the work when one never knew if Hlongwane was going to interfere.

"Yes, but it has gone well so far," continued the black man just as quietly. "You will see that there is something special about this boy."

Örn slowed down his steps. He had already capitulated inwardly, but he continued to object for the sake of prestige.

"There isn't a bed or a mattress vacant, and not a single school desk."

"I'll get a mattress. I have a couple of empty sacks. My wife can sew them together and put straw in them. He can sleep on the floor in the fourth barrack because it isn't so filled there. And I will loan him a chair from my house which he can use in school."

Hlongwane was wise enough to keep his face under control, and look as if the result of the conversation was uncertain. But he knew that he would win. Örn almost always gave in.

"Hm," said Örn, and let on that he weighed the problem. "One can make an exception of course. Well, we'll take him then. But you will be responsible for him."

He gave the black man a thankful look and laughed a little without any real provocation. Prestige would have to yield to make room for the joy.

"All right, Hlongwane, it will be as you want it this time, too. One more—we'll manage that."

He turned on his heels and went back to the family,

tried to hide his enthusiasm and look like a strict school principal. He stood in front of the boy with his hands at his back, lifting and dropping himself on his toes.

"Well, Philemon, we really have no place for you, but we have decided to make an exception since—well. . . . So you are fifteen years old. You can begin in the fourth class tomorrow, and then we can see if you get along."

He surveyed carefully Philemon's little triangular face while he talked. There was supposed to be something special about this boy. Hm, perhaps so. Would be interesting to see.

Selina gave a long quivering sigh of relief. Then she turned toward her husband, gave him a domineering look, and sent him forward to Örn to thank him, as good manners required. Enoch could do that at least. She herself cast a thankful look at the right person, at Hlongwane, who stood behind Örn, his face wrinkled by serious thoughts.

Enoch's tall figure writhed and cringed with politeness and embarrassment while he fumblingly expressed his thanks.

Then Örn gave a friendly nod to the Zondi family and to Hlongwane, and walked to his home with quick steps. He began to sing Bach's Aria with surprisingly strong and well sounding tone, *Mein gläubiges Herz frohlo-ocke*. . . . Then he slowed his steps and lowered his voice to a hum. It is not easy to behave with dignity when one is small of stature, and delighted through and through.

## CHAPTER

### 3

P HILEMON found it a little hard at first to adjust to the boarding school. He slept on the floor while the others had beds, he felt countrified and lost among all the city boys, and he was often left out when his comrades in the barracks rushed away in a group to some deviltry. They used lots of words from the location, slang which he did not understand, and he did not dare take part in the conversation and disclose his ignorance. What was worse, he could not even play football. He soon learned the rules of the game, but the difficult part was to go out on the field the first time. He would surely cut a poor figure and be laughed at, and he did not care at all for that. But he was shrewd and ambitious, and he went around quietly and took in everything with open eyes, and only waited to get one foot in the door, become a member of some gang, and be like the rest. His eyes danced in his little triangular fox-like face, and persistently took in everything. When the other boys tried to tease him he did not answer, only scrutinized them

with crafty and fearless eyes, until they felt like the object of study and lost interest.

After a few weeks he had learned that their tricks were not so difficult. The only thing to do was to talk with a wise and worldly air about girls and stealing, and to climb up a tree in a corner of the compound and jump over the wall when one wanted adventure. You had to know how to shirk sweeping the barracks and how to take part in certain yells when you played football. There was not much more.

One day he felt ready to go out on the athletic field. He went up to one of his classmates suddenly during the noon recess when the field happened to be empty.

"Hey, you, I want to learn to play football."

His schoolmate stood still and stared at him with the expressionless mien which belongs to good tone among boys.

Philemon did not give up.

"Can you help me a bit? Can't you and I play alone so I can practice?"

The schoolmate seemed disgusted.

"It surely will be no fun to play with you."

Now it was important not to give in. If he did he would be more excluded than before. Already a couple of other boys had noticed that the recluse had come out of his corner and had begun to talk. If he should draw back now, then one would run and tell the others that he wanted to play football alone, and then he would be ridiculed without end.

Philemon stared at his schoolmate's jaw as if he had chosen that as the best place to hit him.

"How do you want it? Are you going to play football, or do you want a sock in the jaw?"

The other boy tried to look cocky. "What do you say, farmer boy? Do you think I am afraid of you, eh?"

The two boys stood and looked at one another like two mad baby roosters. Philemon looked quite dangerous, small but sinewy and strong, and with a look that did not give an inch. A kind that hits quickly and hard and never yields.

His schoolmate had a strong feeling that it would pay for him to do as Philemon said.

"All right, I'll give you a lesson. Now go and get the ball. But you are probably too dumb to learn. Farm boys usually are like that."

Now he had saved face, but he took no more risks and went off toward the field half running in the fashion of boys. There they dribbled and passed and made goals and sweated in the noonday heat. The school-boy wanted to skip off a couple of times, but Philemon threatened with a licking again, and did not let him leave until the lunch bell rang.

Then he went back with the ball under his arm and, his partner trailing along, all set for a fight, if anyone else should try to laugh at him. He had won the first round. Now he knew that he would be like one of the others, and not have to be the dumb Zululand boy who was not permitted to be along.

Philemon was soon chosen as leader in a little gang which became a thorn in the flesh of the prefects and the nightwatch and the boys in the highest class. The boarding schoolboys did not turn their devilry to-



ward the teachers and ministers. They knew that there were hundreds of other boys who were waiting to take their places, and they feared nothing more than to be thrown out of school. No one wanted to go back to the location. It could be exciting to run out there and sneak around in the streets in the dark, but it was a different thing always to have to live there crowded together with the family in a tin shack. It was necessary to skip out now and then and live dangerously like a man, but it was absolutely imperative to get home before reveille so that the missionary and the black teachers would not be angry.

At morning prayers in the chapel all the boys had to stand in their places—and did it willingly. Religion is for the African, not something dry or dull or strange, as it often is in Swedish schools. It is a natural subject to talk about in the dormitory and at recess; it is full of exciting stories and songs and connected with going to school and getting a higher education than the lost illiterates in the heathen huts and slum areas. A mission station is a little republic, a piece of the longed-for white people's world, with the church in the center and with school and hospital and workshops and sports all around. To be a Christian is the opposite of being dumb and dirty and backward and from the country. A Swedish boy would make trouble for his scoutleader or his team captain sooner than an African boy would bother his pastor.

There was no difficulty with discipline in the school—at least not in the form of open defiance. But on the other hand, Negro boys could, during their free time do things which would make Swedish boys turn

pale. Nothing was unknown to them. They had grown up in crowded shacks where nothing the adults did could be kept a secret, and in alleys where murder was something quite natural. They had their first sexual experiences at the age of twelve or thirteen years, and things which Swedish boys whisper about in corners, they talked about openly in a way that made new missionaries gasp for breath. After many years in Africa, Eva Örn could still be shocked when her children came home and told what they saw and heard from the boarding schoolboys. To be sure, the Negro boys with their natural art of pretence and adaptiveness tried to talk decently and properly in the presence of white people, but sometimes, of course, it happened that they forgot themselves.

The Örn children—Janne, fourteen years old, Birgit, twelve, and Ulf, eight—had never learned to notice differences in race, but they did not feel really at home among the Negro boys. They felt and thought in a completely different way. Eva and Frederick used to discuss what made the difference. She maintained that it was in the race; he was just as sure that it only depended upon the difference in environment and background.

The Örn children played a good deal with the black boys, but most often all three together, not each one by himself. But usually they played alone in their own little world, in the nursery with Swedish adventure books and playthings, or in the little fenced-in garden behind the missionary's home. Frederick looked upon this isolationism with troubled eyes, sensing in it a tinge of South African white spirit of su-

periority, but Eva thought that it was only necessary self-protection. She ruled in the home, and the children could do what she thought was right.

Other white children seldom came there. Their parents forbade them to associate with the Örn children who lived among Negroes. The Örn children had to ride bicycle quite a distance to a white school every day—the country's laws strictly forbid any mixture of races in schools, and they could not attend at Edwaleni. But in school they were also quite isolated, and most often played alone with each other at recess.

Sometimes they came home all upset, and related that their stupid schoolmates had said that Negroes are only monkeys who should be shot; that they had shouted and commanded black servants who had come to take them home and carry their schoolbags. "Mamma, how can they be like that to the blacks? Just think if they said such things to Pastor Hlongwane?" Then Eva Örn would also become upset. "Yes, children, remember that you must *never* do such things to the Negroes, they are exactly as good as we are."

But the next minute she might correct Frederick because of his impossible theories about race equality. It was best that he did not hear what the children said about the others in school. He only became furious, and wanted to go there and make a scene, and that only brought unpleasant results. People would get angry at the mission and then there might come action by the authorities with investigations and prohibitions and new restrictions for the work at Edwaleni.

Frederick was frankly partial to the blacks, and ag-

gressive on their behalf. He was immeasurably fond of them, seldom became really angry with the school-boys, and let the native teachers and Pastor Hlongwane have their own way. He was constantly moving about and full of ideas, now delighted with the natives, now upset for their sakes, or enthusiastic about new plans for the mission work. He did not really have his soul in his home. He patted his children when he went by them and kissed them goodnight a little absentmindedly, and sometimes with great pomp took a hand in their upbringing. But usually it was Eva who had to hold the home together.

She was slender and blond and quiet, and did not bother much with theories. She looked with calm and a somewhat cool eye upon the many daily problems at Edwaleni, chose her way without making any fuss and was always skeptical about Frederick's theories, whether it was a question of racial problems, dogmatics, liturgy, or rearing children. She compromised and feigned her way along with what she thought was a mother's infallible instinct in the delicate border area between the races where the family lived. She did not believe in any but a temporary solution. She looked upon the blacks kindly, yet somewhat critically, and did not really trust them, except perhaps Pastor Hlongwane. She regarded the white South Africans with dislike and very critically, but she trusted them. You knew where you had them. In her parental home, a quiet and cultivated doctor's family in Stockholm, nobody had ever been enthusiastic about principles—there you were only correct, friendly, and poised.

But Frederick was of a strict religious group from

the Vasa Lutheran congregation in Gothenburg. He was accustomed to looking at life according to dogmatic rules. In his home the serenity was only seeming. Under the surface smoldered a burning conviction of right and wrong. On Sundays in the Vasa Church where orthodox pastors preached, the family sat dressed in black, serious, and looked straight ahead toward the altar. And life was simple and clear—inside in church was God's Word which pointed to the right path, outside was an evil world which pursued its own wrong ways.

He brought this gift of certainty with him to Africa. When he once had taken a stand on the race question he remained firm. Life could then offer as many surprises as it wished.

He was very happy at the Edwaleni mission station, and was busy from morning until night in lecture halls, workshops, clinic, and dormitories. He ran around like a chicken and pitched in here and there, and sometimes he went to the location to visit members of the congregation or visit the parents of the boys. Late at night he would sit down in the office with a sigh and with disgust take care of accounts, statistics, and correspondence with the authorities. It was so boring that he had to smoke a pipe constantly to keep himself awake. But it often happened that his black assistant would come in the evening to talk about the work. Örn always put aside the account books with pleasure, lit a refilled pipe and leaned back in his chair. He sat and observed the black man, with difficulty concealing his admiration and affection. Hlongwane was devoted to his work, calm and wise, and



Örn often had a picture of him in his mind when racial questions were discussed. With Hlongwane in mind, he could maintain with a good conscience that blacks can be just as good as whites—at least just as good.

Their meetings in the office then took the form of leisurely small talk, but in reality it was Hlongwane who sat and gave orders and drew up the plan of direction for the work of the congregation and the treatment of the different boys. New cases of church discipline came up steadily in the black congregation out in the location, which should be discussed. Girls had become pregnant, fellows had come to church drunk, members of the congregation had traded and cheated one another of money, deserted wives came and complained about their need. The guilty ones were excluded from communion for a while, until they had confessed their sin and received absolution. It was important to be sensible and fair—not to be too hard on the poor people in the slum area, but also not to be too indulgent. The Christian morality was a new thing which was to be introduced, and the church had to point the right way and be a light in the darkness and salt in the corruption. Hlongwane went around in the location during the days and quietly investigated the background of the different transgressions, and then he discussed them with Örn.

“Umfundisi, we can’t punish that girl too much, she has never seen anything but squalor around her, and her whole family seems to be the same. Her mother always has men at home. . . . Umfundisi, we will have to clamp down on that man Mlotshwa. Madondo says that he left ten pounds with him for safekeeping and

now Mlotshwa denies this. The judge declared Mlotshwa innocent because there was no proof, but I don't think the church should bother about that. I suppose we will expel him from the congregation for breaking the Seventh Commandment, and not receive him back again until he acknowledges the theft, and pays it back. I think they must learn that it isn't possible to fool the church as easy as the judge. I am sure that he has stolen. Madondo doesn't lie."

"Yes, you are undoubtedly right, Hlongwane. We will see to it that he does not get any pleasure from his acquittal. But just think if he accuses us of libel? Oh well, we'll have to take that risk. The congregation will probably collect enough for the fine."

"Umfundisi, what do you think we should do with Hlengetwa and his wife who want to separate? It is a mess with these divorces. We Zulus never did such things before the white people came here with that custom. It is her fault, I think. She is nasty and mean when he comes home from work. I was there yesterday and heard it myself."

"Well, we will have to brand her publicly in the congregation if she is not good to her husband. Do you think that will help?"

"Yes, I am sure it will. They are afraid to hear their name in church. I can go there tomorrow and tell her what she is to expect. . . ."

"And how is that new boy Philemon making out? That one you said was going to become something special?"

"It will no doubt go well for him. He is better than the others in the class, and the big boys don't seem to

be too hard on him in the dormitory. At first I thought I'd ask the head teacher to make him prefect in crafts or somewhere like that, but that is not necessary, I guess. He will make out anyway. He is a crafty little rascal."

"Do you think we should place him in the school of carpentry?"

"I don't know, umfundisi. He is perhaps not the type to stand and do simple work. He perhaps should have further education and be a lawyer or teacher or something like that . . . !

"So you still think there is something specially remarkable about him?"

"Yes indeed, I think so. He is at least more awake than the others."

"Has he gotten a bed yet?"

"Yes, he got one in place of that boy who was taken to the hospital Friday."

Philemon was, in fact, more wide awake than the others. While the two pastors sat in the office and talked about eleven o'clock in the night, and the whole school slept, he was on his way to the location with two newly acquired friends whom he had taken under his leadership. They crept out through the window on the rear side of the dormitory and sneaked as quietly as spirits to the wall and climbed over. They could easily have gone through the gate, because the night-watch with his club was apparently on his rounds on the other side of the area but it was, of course, a little more exciting to scale the wall. The other two boys,

Tobias and November, were lazy and lacked initiative, as Negro boys often do, and they waited the whole time for Philemon to decide the way, even though they really knew their way around much better than he. Philemon had not really made up his mind what he planned to do in the location, but there were rich possibilities for mischief.

Electric lights glowed above the dormitory doors inside the mission station, but outside the wall it was pitch black. They jumped down from the wall like cats, and remained standing on the road a few minutes to get used to the darkness. Gradually they began to see the contours of the nearest shacks in the moonlight. They crept along, stumbling over stones and garbage. Philemon went first, though he often had to ask the others about the way. One of the first houses lay only about a hundred meters from the wall, and was built of poles and reeds with sacks on top for a roof. One could hear, coming from within, the sounds of the even breathing of people sleeping, and someone's mumbling in his sleep. Philemon carefully drew aside some reeds in the wall, and made a little opening where he tried to look in. He saw nothing, but people slept and snored in all kinds of tones, and the hut must have been full of people. Then he drew back quietly and held council of war with Tobias and November. They giggled and nodded and agreed quickly with his plans. November poked about in the dark, and found an old tin can which he held in readiness. Then the boys began carefully to unfasten the ropes that held the sacks securely over the roof, and slowly drew away one sack after another. Someone

moved inside, and the boys stood absolutely still, their hearts thumping. The other two boys looked at Philemon and waited for the sign to retreat, but he still stayed.

It was quiet in there again, and the boys pulled away the rest of the sack roof, so that the hut lay completely open to the sky. Then Philemon took the tin can, threw it over the wall down on the sleepers, ended up the whole thing with a loud whistle, and ran off with the sacks under his arm. At the corner of a house some meters further away the boys stopped, giggled with delight, and in anticipation elbowed one another in the side.

Inside the roofless hut was first heard a frightened yell, then some more voices, and then the buzzing rose as from a beehive. A Negro's head appeared and looked anxiously up and down the street to see if there were any hooligans who planned to attack. Then a couple of fellows came out and hunted in vain with matches around the house for the vanished roof, but were called in again by anxious women's voices. Philemon threw the sacks away, crept nearer and listened to the family council inside. Apparently they agreed that it was too dangerous to go out on the street, and that the safest way was to resign themselves and wait for morning. Philemon threw a fistful of gravel over the wall as a parting shot and ran back to his friends who, satisfied and giggling, listened to his description of the calamity they had caused in the hut.

Then he decided that there was not any more fun to be gotten out of that situation, and the three wan-



dered away in the middle of the street with the good conscience that a well-accomplished task can give.

Further away lights shone through a tin shack. It was apparently some place of entertainment, and several half-drunk boys and fellows stood in the doorways and were very noisy. The stench of Zulu beer was noticeable far away. It was probably as usual poured into big open clay jugs. One fellow stumbled around on the street, and relieved himself without any ceremony or embarrassment. Outside the lighted area, hidden behind a couple of garbage pails, stood three black girls and stared fascinated at the tavern without daring to go up. Women's voices were heard inside, and they surely did not want any competition. There would only be shouts and trouble if the men got hold of them.

The three boys whispered to one another, crept up to the girls, and put their hands over their mouths from behind. The girls jumped and tried to tear away, all the while making muffled cries. But as soon as they noticed that the boys were only of their own age, the cries changed to giggles and the battle only to a pretence. Nothing to get excited about. Here were three boys and three girls, and the purpose apparent.

Tobias and November did not need Philemon's leadership now any more. Even the dumbest Negro boy knows exactly what he shall do in such a situation, just as he can eat and sleep. No preparations, nor introductions, no flirting, only to the point. You do not become good friends nor talk with the girls. They only have their special use. But before that Philemon wanted to show that he was the leader, and had a

ruler's right to the best bits. He looked over the three girls as well as he could in the dark, chose the plump-est—as he had heard grown men do—the one November held, and let go of the girl he had first taken. November got mad and muttered something, but when Philemon went off with the plump one, he accepted his fate and went reluctantly up to the one Philemon had discarded.

The boys walked away with their obedient sheep, until they found a suitable place in the ruins of a fallen down house. The girls were left there after a while, and the boys walked along indifferently.

Tobias and November thought now that the excursion had been fruitful, and they were ready to go home to the school again, but Philemon had not had enough. He wanted to do something really thrilling. The location had a lot to offer that he had not done as yet.

The night was terribly warm, and the stench from the garbage pails mingled with the smell of smoke from the coal which smouldered here and there in tin cans outside doorways. The other two became even more afraid and unwilling. Philemon led them through endless alleys where they stubbed their toes on the stones and got wet in the puddles, away toward the part of the city where his family lived and where he felt most at home. Only one time during the night did they see policemen, a patrol of eight Zulu constables, armed with long spears and with handcuffs hanging from their belts. The police marched cautiously, close to one another, and talked loudly, which saved them much trouble, and gave possible hooligans a chance to get out of the way in time.

But the boys went as quietly as they could. They only wanted to see some real gangsters—or, more correctly, Philemon did. The other two were already decidedly recalcitrant. One time on a street corner they bumped into a lonely night wanderer, who almost scared the life out of them, and who himself became so frightened that he fled head over heels the way he had come. That gave them a little courage, and they laughed long and in a forced manner, to show each other how unafraid they were. But their bodies shook, and they had to laugh with mouths wide open so that their teeth should not rattle. Philemon's triangular fox-like face was on tenterhooks from excitement, and his eyes danced in all directions. He had also begun to lose a little interest, but he had to maintain prestige in front of his schoolmates.

When they came to the alley where Philemon's family lived, they at last found what they sought. A group of five shabbily dressed Negroes, clearly "Tsotsis," robbers, stood and banged on the door of a tin shack, a short distance from Philemon's home.

Quietly and slowly the boys crept toward them, the two of them coming behind and holding hands. Their eyes were wide with terror. The robbers stood with their backs turned, and did not notice them. The door to the shack had just opened and a terrified Negro stuck out his head. The fellows outside grabbed hold of him immediately and pulled him out. One of them took out a long knife and put it at his throat while the others held him tight.

"Have you any money at home," asked the leader, and pressed the knife a little closer to his throat.

"Y-y-yes," stammered the Negro, and tried to push away. "We, we, I have, I think eighty-five shillings."

The boys had gotten near enough to hear the conversation.

"Haven't you more?" asked the man with the knife. "Don't hurt me," begged the poor fellow in a pitiable tone. "I'll give you all I have. My wife has probably ten shillings, too."

"Give them to us right away. And throw out all the clothes you have in there. And your pass and your working permit, too. Quick now, or we'll cut you in bits."

The other thieves threw him in through the door and stood waiting for the booty. They apparently felt safe and talked unconcernedly with one another. One of them lit a cigarette.

Philemon stared as if bewitched. Suddenly he did something which he at heart did not dare to do, and which he himself could not have explained. In a dreamy and unnatural excitement he took half a brick which lay on the ground and slung it right in the middle of the fellows. The one who was hit swore and pulled out his long knife, and in a second the whole gang was in full pursuit of Philemon.

At the same time the Negro came out of the house with a pile of clothes in his arms and looked around astonished. Then he threw the pile through the door and ran as fast as he could down the alley in the opposite direction.

Tobias and November had already done what they had long wished to do, and were in wild flight up the alley, stumbling and hopping over stones and junk.

Philemon tried to get away, too, but he had started too late, and after some ten yards they caught up with him. He fell headlong, and over him fell one of the gangsters, got his arm around Philemon's throat and knifed him several times in the arm. The others came close behind, and stood breathless in a ring around him. One of them turned when he saw that the intruder was only a boy, and went back to the tin shack where the door still stood open. The fellow who had knifed Philemon got up and pulled the boy with him, lit a match and looked at his face.

"Who are you? What do you mean by throwing stones at me, you dog?"

Now Philemon was through with his cockiness. He was only a desperate and scared child whose arm ached. He could not answer, only cried miserably and nursed his right arm.

"Oh, let that rabbit alone. It's only a boy," suggested one of the others, and stuffed his knife back in his sleeve.

"No, by the spirit of Senzangakhona," pompously answered the man who held Philemon. "No one can throw stones on tsotsi leader Dladla. We will earmark this jackal."

"No, let him alone. If it had been a white kid, we could have killed him but this one is of our own."

Now the tsotsi who had gone back to the tin shack found out that the evening's victim had gotten away, and called his comrades to come along. Philemon stopped being interesting. The gang leader threw him brutally to the ground, and ran back to the shack. With wild oaths all five forced their way through the



door, lighted matches, kicked the women who lay on the floor, and for themselves gathered what they could. Then they came out again, carrying clothing and blankets, and went by Philemon without bothering with him.

He remained lying there, and cried forlornly until all was calm on the street again. Then he got up and half ran, sniffing and hobbling, down to the end of the alley where his home was and banged on the door.

It was a little poor, bloody thing that Selina saw when she opened the door. . . .

The next day Philemon was weak from loss of blood. Selina had used the family's two towels to bind the arm, but it still bled through. She was deeply worried. It was not enough that the boy was sick, and that it was hard to get him to the mission's infirmary. He probably also would be expelled from school because he had sneaked out at night.

The first problem was transportation. Philemon was too weak to walk, and none of the neighbors was willing to help her carry him. She did not know how to get a taxi, and besides an automobile could not come into their small alleys. Enoch had gone away to work a little earlier than usual to escape being drawn into the unpleasantness. His brain stood still as usual; it was, of course, Selina who would make decisions anyway.

After much meditation Selina decided to use the bed as a stretcher. With some trouble she tugged the bed-spring through the door and put it on the ground,

spread out a blanket, and put Philemon on it. And so commenced the trip through long alleys toward Edwaleni. Selina carried one end, and the three little girls helped at the other end. The sisters carried it askew, so that Philemon almost fell off, and a couple of times they dropped the bed, so that it landed on their toes, and they had to be consoled. They were shorter than Selina so that the boy's head was too low and he had to be turned the other way. Along the streets people stood and looked at the miserable carriage, but no one lifted a finger to help them. In the city, amidst danger and strangers, the natives were afraid to help. The problem was not to get involved, but just to save one's own skin. Here and there was a Christian who was helpful, because the ministers preached about it; but it happened that there was none such to be found along the alleys where Selina carried her boy.

At last they came to Edwaleni and by that time the small girls were already downhearted and ready to cry. The bedspring was put down on the ground in front of the steps to the clinic. Selina and the girls sat crouched around it, and waited for something to happen. She did not dare to go directly in, because people in the waiting line on the lawn were surely anxious for their turn, and would be angry if they were by-passed.

At last the black nurse came out, plump and sure of herself, with shining glasses, the indispensable symbol of being educated.

"Nkosazana, miss," said Selina quietly, "my boy is bleeding. He has been knifed."

The nurse nodded condescendingly and yet in a

friendly manner. Her little round face was half-hidden behind huge glasses.

"We'll soon take care of him. There are already two other cases of knifing in there that came in this morning. It will be all right. We will give him penicillin and probably a blood transfusion, in case he has lost too much blood."

Selina thanked her humbly. That sounded learned, incomprehensible, and reassuring.

When Philemon had come in and been taken care of, Selina got up and told her girls that they should remain sitting on the ground and watch the bedspring. With heavy and hesitating steps she went over to Pastor Hlongwane's house. The worst remained. Would the boy be allowed to stay at school?

She rapped on the pastor's door, timid and submissive.

"Come in," called Hlongwane. He heard by the rap that it was a native out there, and spoke in Zulu. Had it been Örn or a white school inspector or a tradesman, the knock would have sounded more fearless. A white man knocks as one who has rights and can expect to be welcomed. A native is likely to stand and wait a while to see if the owner of the house will by chance come out anyway. Then he knocks, fumblingly and hesitatingly, prepared to be snubbed. There is always a difference between the rulers and the suppressed.

Selina remained standing out there without having the courage to enter.

Hlongwane came out on the steps in his shirt sleeves and nodded as he recognized her. He had expected her.

Philemon's disappearance had already been reported to him.

Selina turned her back politely toward the pastor and sat down, as Zulu etiquette demands.

"We saw you, Selina," Hlongwane greeted her.

The woman did not respond yet to the greeting. It is most polite to wait.

"Umfundisi," it came with a heavy sigh. "We have sinned, we have sinned severely. You were good to us, but we failed you."

"So you say, Mother. What then are your sins?"

He knew very well what it was about, but it does not do to take short cuts in a conversation with Zulus. That is only with white people. With them you are supposed to tumble in with the door, and go directly to the point, and be hurried and disagreeable.

"Yes, umfundisi," said Selina. "My boy got a big gift which he did not earn. But he threw the gift away to the winds."

"Yes, but he can perhaps get the gift back again? Maybe no one has taken it yet?"

"Yes, umfundisi, but he who gave the gift probably is bitter and punishes my boy."

She did not have strength any longer to follow the ceremonious pathway to the main point of the conversation. . . .

"O father of the flock, he fled from you last night and broke your laws."

"I know, Mother, I have heard about it. Where is he now?"

"He is down in the hospital. Umfundisi, he was attacked by tsotsis. They cut him with knives."

Hlongwane looked troubled.

"Is he seriously ill?"

"Oh no, the nurse thought he would get well. But umfundisi," continued Selina lamentingly, "how will it be with him? Will you talk to the missionary so that he can stay? Or are you angry with him? He broke your laws, and he was ungrateful. Oh, we have sinned badly."

Hlongwane nodded.

"Yes, Mother, I will talk to the missionary. I don't think Philemon will be driven away. But he can't do that again. There are many who want to come in, and we must first help those who want to follow rules and regulations at the school."

To himself Hlongwane thought: It'll take a lot more to drive that boy away. He will get his chance. Örn will see that I was right anyway.

"Come, Mother," he continued. "Let's go down and talk with him."

Selina still sat on the ground with her back toward the pastor. But she had new hope, and she began in Zulu fashion to show her happiness. She clapped her hands noiselessly and emitted a long series of short smacking sounds, nci, nci, nci. . . .

Hlongwane looked at her from the back and laughed to himself. Then he went in to put on his coat, so that he would appear with full dignity at the hospital.

The pastor and the mother stood on each side of Philemon's bed in the hospital. The boy had a gray-



black color which natives get instead of becoming pale, and he looked uneasily from one to the other.

"We saw you, my boy," Hlongwane greeted him.

"We saw you, Father," answered the boy and raised his sound arm straight up in the air in a formal Zulu greeting. It looked a little silly when he did it lying in bed.

Hlongwane controlled a smile, and tried to look stern.

"You have done badly, my boy. You should really be expelled from school."

Philemon's little gray-black fox face sank deeper into the white pillow from fright. He looked intently at the pastor, and searched for signs of leniency.

"Yes, Father," he mumbled meekly. "The devil came into me, and drove me to sin."

Philemon's eyes lighted up a little. He thought that he had hit upon a rather good and pious explanation.

But the pastor was hardened to such things.

"What were you doing out at night? Don't you like school?"

"Yes, umfundisi, he does. He loves school. He wants to stay here always."

That was Selina who interrupted again. The boy could have answered something stupid. She quickly sat down on the floor to show her politeness, with her back half toward the pastor, and with her eyes on the boy.

"What did you do in the location?" continued Hlongwane.

"Father, umfundisi," began Selina uneasily. "The lad is weak in faith and ruled by the devil. He wants . . ."

"Yes, yes, Mother," the pastor interrupted. "Your words are good and wise. But let the lad talk for himself now."

Selina remained quiet, but kept her eyes on the boy, and tried to draw out of him the right words, and drive away the dangerous ones. Just think if he spoils it all for himself now again.

Inwardly Hlongwane had fun with the two. They were ludicrously like one another.

Philemon began to talk, gave a well-ordered description of how he bravely attacked the band of robbers, but had lost out to superiority of numbers. He became inspired during the course of the explanation, and at last almost believed that his purpose really had been to organize a crusade against the location's evil.

Hlongwane was used to the Zulu's outstanding ability to describe things, and he subtracted quietly at least half of the heroic feats. But it was interesting to hear what the boy could think up. He lied cleverly and well.

Philemon paused and made a quick plan for further tales. The tussle with the gangsters could not have taken such a long time. He had to fill in the story with other episodes.

The pastor would certainly not appreciate the story about the girls, and still less the one about stealing the roof from some poor people. It was necessary to think up something better. Fumblingly at first, and then more and more excitedly, he explained how the boys met a poor suffering woman who had lost her way and did not dare go home alone, and added to that had a heavy sack to carry. They had carried the

bag for her, and helped her all the way home and. . . .

He stopped suddenly. Just think if the pastor had already talked with Tobias and November, and had heard the true version of the night's happenings. He gave his mother a troubled look. Then he got control of himself, and tried piously to look Hlongwane straight in the face, but his heart pounded under the blanket.

The pastor had not believed a word of the last saintly half of the story. It seemed influenced too much by his own Sunday school teaching. But he was not at all disillusioned or upset. That is an old Zulu custom—to lie before the judge; and he who lies well, wins favors from the chief. He has at least shown his fear of the punitive authority. And they lied in the presence of church councils and pastors almost as much as before chieftains.

He tried to look stern.

"When you leave the hospital, my boy, you will have to clean the barracks alone for two weeks because you ran away. And then you will have to clean an additional week because you lied to me. If you sneak out at night again, you will be expelled from school."

Philemon lifted his head from the pillow, and nodded eagerly and thankfully.

"Yes, Father, I will do that. I thank you. I will clean alone for three weeks."

Selina rounded out the conversation by eagerly strengthening and confirming what had been said.

"Yes, my child, do all that umfundisi has said. Mind him, my child. You can just as well clean the dormitories four, yes, five weeks. And umfundisi's own

house, too, if he wants you to. It is a great favor which has befallen you, my child."

Then she turned her head away from the pastor, looked down at the floor, and began with a monotonous voice to recite a long ode of homage as becomes one who has been acquitted by a chieftain.

"Umfundisi, father, O great leader of the congregation! You who are good and wise look in mercy upon your weak sheep. You who are learned and have compassion upon the unlearned. You great bull of the suns, conqueror of witchcraft, you who see through all intrigues, you who bring your enemies to shame, you elephant's tusk, you great lion . . ."

The homage continued flowing a good while in the same chanting tone. It was not usual that women could formulate their words so well. Composing was the work of men among the Zulus. But she was not like other Zulu wives, who patiently and thoughtlessly listen to the men. In the Zondi family the husband obeyed as if he had been the woman.

It was not long until Philemon's courage was up again. He boasted to the other boys at the hospital about his bravados in the location, constantly added new details, until the story about the thieves lost all contact with reality, and he himself stood out as a shining hero. The simple Negro boys in the beds on either side of him lay quietly admiring him, and were happy to know such a prominent hero. When Philemon left the hospital he had climbed several rungs up the ladder toward the pinnacles of power.





## CHAPTER

# 4

ON THE Swedish flag day, when the Swedish colony in Johannesburg came together and felt patriotic, Örn had ended up in a corner with some good friends. He had taken the occasion to invite them to Edwaleni to see at closer range how the Negroes live in the location and how the mission works. They had begun to discuss the Negro problem quite vehemently, and Örn was a bit worried about how the visit would turn out.

They arrived one afternoon in Mr. Ternsten's luxurious automobile. There was Ternsten himself, his wife, and two other Swedish ladies—Miss Kallengren who worked in his office, and Mrs. Kingsley who was married to an English African-born business man. Ternsten was head of a large Swedish textile factory in Johannesburg. He was about fifty, distinguished looking, with a few gray hairs, and spoke with the calm friendliness which a man can afford when he has risen as high as possible in this life, and is used to arranging everything according to his own wishes. His wife was just cut out for a director's wife, had the same calm, sure manner as her husband. You never raised

your voice in the Ternsten home. The couple was friendly and helpful as far as they thought was right, but were very careful not to allow their enthusiasm to go too far, and really to engage in any controversy. Years of experience as representatives at dinners, and contacts with important and difficult people, had worn off almost all their edges and their proneness to moods.

Eva Örn got along very well with them. They had the same sober atmosphere about them that she was used to in her parental home in Linköping. The missionary home at Edwaleni was of course very plain in comparison with Ternsten's house, but she had enough pride not to be ashamed of her simple abode.

Frederick on the contrary felt unsure of himself in Ternsten's company. He was too biased and too much of a missionary to be able to appreciate their calm and subdued style of living. His own actions were accompanied by quite a bit of noise and affectation. He did not have a director's personality, it was too easy for him to take sides, and fall for human beings. It was not easy for him to be content with what was practically possible. He constantly tormented himself, and often others as well, with principles and ideas which went contrary to reality. He found it easy to believe in other people and in ideas, but down deep inside him he felt quite small and groping. He was in the habit of compensating for his insecurity before the Ternstens by being especially dogmatic and assertive.

Miss Kallengren was a round and eager little person, and reminded one of a well-fed squirrel. She had been sent out one time by a Swedish newspaper to write articles about South Africa, but had liked the

country so much that she stayed and sought work in Ternsten's office. She was a real woman, warmhearted, illogical, and biased, and always ready to be contrary. She would surely have been a wonderful mother, but no man had dared take the tempest into his house. She was often a guest in the director's home, and Ternsten used to listen to her tirades with an amused smile, quite grateful that she added color to his dinners. She was full of enthusiasm for the Negroes, and used to appear as their brave defender. She had brought that attitude along from Sweden, and she had kept it, even though she had very little practical use for it. In Ternsten's office there were only a couple of black cleaners and elevator boys.

Mrs. Kingsley was born south of the road between Lund and Malmö in Sweden and her maiden name was Jönsson. She had fallen in love with a South African, English speaking business man who had come to visit Sweden, and returned with him as his wife. She had accepted her husband's point of view, hook, line and sinker, and had become more South African than the South Africans themselves. The people of South Africa often had a certain attachment to the Negroes—as one has toward an old trusted dog or horse; and looked upon them as indispensable to the household, and was often friendlier toward them in practice than in theory, but Mrs. Kingsley had nothing but disgust for the blacks. She thought them lazy, pretentious, and false, and lived always in a certain terror of her own servants. She only went along to Edwaleni really to get verification for her point of view that missionaries spoil the natives and exaggerate their poverty.

She often met Miss Kallengren and quarrelled hotly with her—mostly about the Negroes, but sometimes also about the Boers. She had assumed her husband's very English disgust for all that was called Boer, and Miss Kallengren took the opposite side to be contrary, although she otherwise used to criticize the party in power.

Eva stayed home and got the afternoon tea ready while the whole party drove out in the Stoneville location with Frederick as guide. Ternsten's big Cadillac rode silently and softly like a purring cat, it glided smoothly over the bumpy streets, but it could not go into the smallest alleys. The four Swedish guests were quite disturbed by what they saw. Örn held a lecture, eagerly and a bit passionately, about poverty, and starvation, and crime. Mrs. Kingsley gathered herself together at last, and admitted that it looked worse than she had thought, but maintained that it was essentially the Negroes' own fault. They did not deserve anything better, since they could not keep their towns clean.

"So, they can't keep clean?" said Örn. "Wait, and you will see."

He led the group to another location, which lay further away, and where the government had provided the blacks with small, neat brick houses about as large as a Swedish seaside house. The streets were clean, and there was a calm and friendly atmosphere about the town. Lovely curtains were seen everywhere in the windows and small gardens well tended.

"Look there," he said triumphantly. "It pays to

build decently for the Negroes. They get ambitious and keep clean, if only they have space."

"Yes, but is it right to spoil them like this?" asked Mrs. Kingsley wonderingly. "They only want everything free. Why should the white people build houses for them?"

"Yes, but it is not a question of charity," answered Örn. "They have to pay regular rents, so the government doesn't lose by building for them. If other locations were managed decently like this, the racial problem would shrink to reasonable proportions."

"And further," added Miss Kallengren eagerly, "how would the Negroes be able to build their own houses on the starvation wages they get? And why shouldn't we white people do something for the Negroes? Why, we have come here and stolen the whole country from them and we get rich on their work."

"Nonsense," answered Mrs. Kingsley. "They are the ones who live on us. Without us they would starve to death."

And so they were at it again. Mrs. Kingsley and Miss Kallengren got into one of their usual quarrels, and snapped back and forth by Örn in the back seat for the rest of the trip. Örn had still quite a lot to say, and he was able now and then to make himself understood by the Ternstens, who sat quietly in the front seat and tried to hear what he said. But the argument in the back seat continued in the old well-known and well-worn tracks during the whole trip, and the atmosphere was rather strained when the party arrived at Edwaleni mission station.



Eva had set the afternoon tea table out under a tree in front of the missionary home. At a distance stood black schoolboys and teachers and watched the distinguished crowd while they made lively comments in Zulu. A couple of the most daring went up and fingered the Cadillac when the Swedes had seated themselves under the tree.

Eva sensed the situation, and tried to clear the air by speaking about weather and wind and flowers while she served tea. But soon the discussion was going again. It was Mrs. Ternsten who began.

"Listen, Frederick, you who know the blacks and speak their language and everything, what do you really think about the Negroes? How are they really? Can one depend on them?"

Frederick laughed. "I have heard that question many times. May I ask you a counterquestion? How are Europeans 'really'? Can you depend on them?"

Mrs. Ternsten thought it over.

"Well, one can't answer that, of course. It probably was a dumb question for me to ask."

"Well, I only mean that one has to take Negroes as individuals. You can't take them as a group any more than you can take Swedes or any other people. It is so common to speak about the Negroes, and say that they are so and so. But one does that only if one stands at a distance and looks at them as a strange black mass. If one associates with them daily, one forgets completely to speak of them as 'the Negroes.' One speaks of Mkize and Dlamini and Camane, exactly as one talks of Anderson and Peterson and Lundström. It is

completely impractical and meaningless to take them as a group. And it is just as ridiculous to say that one 'likes the Negroes' or 'doesn't like them.' One doesn't 'like the white people,' or 'does not like them.' Some are nice and some are nasty. In the beginning one wonders about 'the right way to take or handle the Negroes.' Should one be stern or lenient with them? But it is a wonderful release, when one forgets such foolishness, and just accepts them as individuals. Just think if one should have a certain method of handling black haired Swedes and another method for the blond. There isn't anything that confuses and stupefies the brain so much as this thinking along racial lines."

"Yes, you think, of course, that we ask such foolish questions, we who do not have much to do with them in daily life. But I mean, are there not just the same certain characteristics that they have that belong to the race?"

Örn put his cup down and lit his pipe without haste. He hoped that Mrs. Kingsley and Miss Kallengren would be quiet a long time, so that the discussion could continue without quarrels.

"Oh, yes," he answered after he had blown out his first cloud of smoke. "That is conceivable. But I am not quite sure. There is a difference, of course, in the racial behavior in certain respects, but that might be a result of environment and upbringing. There have been intelligence tests which did not show the least difference between the natives and the whites."

Now Mrs. Kingsley was ready to begin to battle again.

"I don't believe that," she said in well bred tone. "I think it is in the race. One can never make a human being out of a black man."

Mrs. Ternsten looked searchingly at her a minute, and tried not to show how much she disliked her. But Örn, on the other hand, did not hide his irritation.

"So, one can't make people of them?" he said. "Let me then introduce to you my good friend and colleague, the black Pastor Hlongwane. I have never doubted that he is a much better person than I."

He got up and called in Zulu to a schoolboy who was passing by through the courtyard.

"Listen, run over to Pastor Hlongwane and ask him if he would like to come and have tea with us!"

Eva sighed. Frederick always had to make such a fuss and be dramatic. This could become unpleasant.

At any rate, she maintained a calm and unruffled look, and went to get an extra cup.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Kingsley in a sarcastic tone, "you can do that, of course, but such a casual acquaintance cannot change my outlook. The Negroes are stupid and undependable, and would never be able to manage this country."

Miss Kallengren exploded again.

"Then you mean, of course, that the white people are wise and capable and fine people. People always say like that: 'The Negroes are so bad.' And then it is taken for granted: 'but the white people are so good.' But no one will get me to say about South Africans that they are stupid and lazy and heartless and full of prejudices."

"Oh, well, people in Sweden, at least, don't think that Negroes are worse than the white people," said Mrs. Kingsley. "After all that you have dinned into them in your ladies' magazines, they surely believe that the white people are brutal hangmen who torment our noble black brothers."

None of them was as angry as it sounded. They were used to one another, and complemented each other like flint and tinder.

Örn sat quietly smoking his pipe, and let them carry on. It is pleasant sometimes when guests amuse themselves.

Ternsten had also remained quiet. The discussion had sunk down to a level where he had no desire to follow along. But he had a feeling that he ought to prevent a quarrel in the pastor's house. He laughed a little to show which note should be maintained, and began to speak lightly and conversationally.

"Gradations, my ladies, gradations. Let us not be too categorical in our judgments. I thought Frederick here had gotten into a line of thought which sounded quite sensible—that about taking natives and other people as individuals and not as a group. But isn't it rather daring to bring up such thoughts in South Africa? I mean the whole legislation is built on group divisions. People with white skin have the right to vote and the right to buy land and such, but people with black skin don't. Those are real bombs you are throwing out. The ground trembles under our feet."

Frederick struck the same note, and tried not to sound argumentative.

"You are so right, so right. If one takes people as individuals, then one must of course demand equal treatment before the law, and that is a terrible and upsetting thought. That shakes the very foundations of the community."

"I don't believe there should be equality before the law" added Miss Kallengren. "I think the Negroes should have it better than the white people a while, since they have had it worse so long."

As usual, no one took her seriously. But Mrs. Kingsley continued on Örn's line of thought.

"But do you really think, Pastor, that there should be no difference between blacks and whites? Then they will associate like equals, and then there will be racial intermarriage. You wouldn't want to see your daughter married to a native?"

Frederick opened his mouth to answer, but Eva interrupted before him with her calm and melodious voice.

"Well, dear Astrid, now you are up to that everlasting argument. One points at the terrible ghost of racial intermarriage, and then one has justified any kind of laws whatsoever. Exactly as if blacks and whites would fall in one another's arms if the law did not prevent them. There were hardly any mixed marriages even when it was allowed. I don't think our daughter will ever have the desire to marry a black man. I could for my part never dream of being married to a native. We are just too unlike."

"Why not" wondered Miss Kallengren. "They can be so charming. And they sing so beautifully."



Ternsten looked amused.

"Dear Stina, you don't plan to do anything rash?"

Stina blushed.

"Really, you are silly. I don't mean for my own sake. Only purely on principle. Wouldn't it be just as well to stir in the kettle a little so we would be grayish all of us, and then we wouldn't have any racial problem?"

Ternsten turned to Örn.

"Let's keep our feet on the ground, and talk a little sensibly. Frederick, I must say I was a bit shaken by what I saw in the location today. What do you think that we, for example, can do to help them?"

Örn looked at him with deep respect. He felt poorly qualified to give advice to a man like Ternsten.

"Well, the only thing I can say is that I think that each one of us should be as fair as he can toward the Negroes he meets in his daily life. We foreigners cannot influence the politics much, of course. As for you, I can honestly say that I think you have done all that you can. I have seen how well workers are treated in your factory, and I know that your servants are as well off as they possibly can wish. If someone will get me a hat I will take it off to you!"

Mrs. Kingsley felt the implied criticism, and two red spots appeared on her cheeks.

"But, Pastor," interrupted Miss Kallengren. "Can't we also help by writing in foreign papers about racial subjugation? Surely the government isn't absolutely indifferent to world opinion?"

Now Mrs. Kingsley felt that she had to assert herself again.

"Yes, little Stina, you have done your share there beautifully. You, and many others. There isn't any country in the world, is there, that is criticized like South Africa. Why don't they write about other countries? There are plenty of places in the world where there are even worse slum areas, but nothing is said about it. Think how the peasants live in Egypt, and China, and so on. But it is only these Negroes they fuss about."

The Öorns began to answer at the same time, but Frederick let his wife continue, with a resigned gesture.

"Yes, you know, Astrid, there is indeed just as much poverty in other places, and a great difference between poor and rich. But there the difference is deplored, or in any case there isn't anyone who really maintains that it should be so. But here the difference is set down in law, and people think of it as a holy principle that a certain group should have privileges. That idea has been condemned almost everywhere else in the world."

"Oh, well, poor and poor, that makes no difference. Peasants in Egypt starve just as much, even though the law doesn't have anything to do with it."

"Yes, but psychologically there is a big difference, I think, if people know that there is at least a theoretical chance for them to work themselves up. People must get bitter if one says to them that they can never become leaders because of the color of their skin."

There was silence a minute. Stina Kallengren gave Mrs. Kingsley a triumphant look, and the others looked in the direction of the school where the bell just rang for recess, and an earsplitting noise broke out. Eva took the chance to offer more tea.

Mrs. Kingsley began again.

"But one thing we are all agreed on. We are very well off in this country. All of us sitting here have servants, and we have pleasant homes to live in, and fantastically low taxes. We are better off than we would have been in Sweden. I think it is wrong when we are so well off, to write in foreign papers and defame the country. We should be thankful to South Africa."

They were quiet a minute. Then little Miss Kallengren's face brightened. She had found a really good one to serve Astrid.

"So, my dear, we should be bribed into silence? Should we be tickled because we belong to the privileged reigning group? And close our eyes to how the slaves live? That is just like in Nazi Germany. Don't say anything about how Jews are treated, and then you can do business with the government, and be invited by SS big shots to have champagne. Well, Astrid, I did not believe that of you."

She looked around triumphantly to gather in her laurels. But Mrs. Kingsley did not give in.

"You can take another comparison which is better. If you are a guest in a home, it is not nice to write in the papers that the hosts mistreat their servants—especially if it isn't true at all. If a person wants to

make himself important and mingle in other people's affairs, then you should at least speak discreetly to the hosts in private."

Stina fought back.

"But what has happened to those who 'have spoken discreetly' to this country's hosts? They are called Communists, and are forbidden to attend meetings and gatherings, and are trailed by the police. But the police cannot get at foreign newspapers. Therefore I continue to write there."

Mrs. Kingsley smiled sarcastically.

"Well, if you would only write the truth. There is so much lying about South Africa."

"The Russians say that, too. It is only lies—all that about Siberia."

The company began to tire of the bickering. The other two ladies opened a conversation in their corner, Ternsten glanced at his watch, and Örn looked as though he wanted to get busy with something else.

But they did not disperse at yet. Pastor Hlongwane arrived at long last, with discreet steps, as if he were walking on glass. He had obviously put on his best suit in a hurry and a clean white collar. If Negro hair could be combed, he would surely have had his hair slicked down with water. He did not seem to be enjoying the situation very much. You could not feel comfortable with white people—except with your colleagues in the mission. You could not have fun with white people—at the most just suffer through the time together. There was so much tension in the atmosphere.

Örn looked at him with satisfaction. It was apparent that Hlongwane was troubled, but he could not help but look stately and dignified. I don't feel comfortable with you, his appearance seemed to say, but I am not afraid of you. I am king in my own domain.

The company looked at him with interest. They were not used to seeing Negroes from the educated group. Usually they only had contact with black servants. Educated Negroes kept away from the white people's areas of the city, where a visit would only bring about humiliation.

Örn went up to him and shook his hand.

"Pardon me for disturbing you, Hlongwane. There were a few Swedish acquaintances here whom I wished you to meet."

He turned toward the guests, and changed from Zulu to English.

"May I present my colleague Pastor Hlongwane—Mrs. Ternsten. . . ."

Hlongwane went around and shook hands with the guests in the order of presentation. Ternsten stood up when he greeted Hlongwane, but the ladies remained seated—except for little Miss Kallengren who jumped up and shook his hand with a raptured look.

"So nice to meet you," she said and used both her hands and nodded at least four times. Hlongwane bowed with reserve, a bit amazed.

Lastly he came to Mrs. Kingsley. She had been in the country many years, but had never yet taken a Negro by the hand. A hard mental struggle was reflected in her face, at last dying away in tired resigna-

tion. She stretched out her hand limp like a dishcloth. Hlongwane could not control himself. He looked down at her hand to see if there was something wrong with it. Then he blushed so that his face became a dark red instead of dark brown. Stina Kallengren had carefully grasped the situation, and gave Mrs. Kingsley a furious look, which the latter heartily returned.

Then they discovered that there was no empty chair for Hlongwane. With a demonstrative look at Astrid Kingsley, Miss Kallengren got up and offered her chair to the native pastor. He became confused and looked appealingly to his white fellow worker for help.

Örn suffered inwardly. If only people would act natural.

"Sit down, dear lady," he said in Swedish.

In English he said to Hlongwane. "Take my chair, I'll get another one."

He picked up his empty chair promptly and placed it beside Ternsten before he went. It looked strange to do this, but it could not be helped; he had to put the black man beside a sensible person while he was gone.

"Would you like some tea?" asked Eva.

"No, thank you," Hlongwane answered. He had correctly grasped Mrs. Kingsley's attitude, and did not want any further complications by taking new liberties in the company of white people.

Ternsten now took control of the situation, and began to talk with Hlongwane. He spoke calmly and naturally, yet could not help but sit and observe the native.



"You have a fine mission station here," he began.

Hlongwane looked down toward the school.

"Yes, it is good. We want it to be a sort of oasis in the location. We only wish that it were five times larger."

Both of them spoke fluently in English, but the accents from Stockholm and Zululand could easily be discerned.

"How many boys do you have in school?"

"About four hundred, but we only have room for three hundred."

Hlongwane smiled. "We always accept too many. It is hard to say no."

"So you have no difficulty in getting people in school?"

"Not at all. And not in church either. It is always terribly crowded."

"That is interesting, here apparently you have difficulty in getting churches for the people. At home in Sweden it is the reverse. There it is hard to get people for the churches. Why do you think that is?"

Hlongwane gradually warmed up. It was good to talk with a man, and be rid of those two queer women. He felt a little more at ease, crossed his legs, and leaned backward in his chair.

"Well, I don't know," he answered. "I don't know your country. I only know that people here need the church."

Ternsten thought a while.

"Listen, Pastor Hlongwane, I have a factory with several hundred native workers. I would be very

grateful if you would come and talk to them some day. Would you want to do that?"

The black man turned and looked straight at Ternsten. Happiness surged up, first in his eyes, and then spread over his whole face.

"Yes sir, I would like to do that. When can I come?"

Now it was Hlongwane's turn to observe Ternsten. He looked long and searchingly at him, as though he had not seen him before. He began to smile. It was a smile that came from deep down inside.

Ternsten felt as if he stood on a threshold to a curiously enticing, harmonious world which he never before had had the opportunity to look into. What Örn says is not true, he thought. Africans are not like us. We are divided and impoverished people. This curious and deep joy about a small thing. . . . Or was it perhaps not a small thing?

Here we live in Africa, but we do not know Africa, he thought. One must, no doubt, either hate or love these people. Or both at one time . . . ? They are not like us.

The shivers went up and down his spine.

"Sir, which day is it best that I come?"

Ternsten pulled himself together.

"Excuse me, I was only thinking. Well, will Thursday be acceptable for example? I can call them together at noon hour."

"Yes, I'll come."

"I'll send a car to get you."

"Thank you, that is not necessary. I'll take the train. What is the address?"

Örn returned with the chair. He knew Hlongwane well, and saw immediately that all was well. He placed his chair beside Stina Kallengren, and while the others continued to chat, he began to talk cautiously with her.

"I hope you will pardon me, if I offer some advice," he whispered.

"Yes, of course."

Örn bent further down and began to deliver a long lecture.

"I appreciate very much your positive attitude toward the blacks. But it is best to be natural with them anyway. You got up and offered Pastor Hlongwane your chair, and you got up when you greeted him. You don't ever do that for a white man in this country, whether he is Swedish or English, do you? Then there is no reason to do it for a native either. To treat them with exaggerated friendliness is just as much a mistake as to treat them in an overbearing manner. In both cases one indicates that one does not consider them as ordinary people. That is almost as when a man comes out of prison. Then people avoid him or else are overly friendly. If you meet any educated Negroes again, treat them exactly as though they were Mr. Smith or Mr. Karlson. Well, I beg your pardon for interfering."

"No, not at all, I am only thankful. My, what a fine looking fellow he is."

"Oh, perhaps. He is a good fellow anyway. In any case, we work together exactly as if he were Swedish or anything whatever."

Ternsten was still talking with Hlongwane, and Eva

with Mrs. Ternsten. Mrs. Kingsley sat quietly by herself. Ternsten felt it his duty to try to unite the guests again into a group conversation. He turned to Örn and said loudly in English:

"Frederick, Pastor Hlongwane and I have talked about how people go to church more in Africa than in Sweden. Why is that? What do you think?"

Örn lit his pipe again, and was in his glory. He liked to talk and argue.

"Well, you know, I have thought about that a lot. At home we have big, half-empty and beautiful churches with cemeteries around them. Here we have crowded, simple, and worn churches with lots of people and schools and clinics around them. There is more activity around the church here; it is right in the stream of life here. Even so it is the same teachings and the same kind of pastors here in the mission as at home in Sweden."

"Is it because the mission is part of the work of civilizing life here? With schools, hospitals, and such? You know, it has stopped doing such things at home in Sweden."

"Yes, that is no doubt partly true. It can look as though the church fills a need in a certain cycle of a people's development in civilization, and that people later grow away from it. But from a deeper viewpoint this cannot be true. The church has more important duties than to teach people to read and the like. It should prepare souls for eternity. But as a matter of fact, there usually is a certain curve in a people's attendance at church. Up and then down."

Stina and Astrid lost interest, and began a soft-voiced dispute, but the others listened. Örn gave the two ladies an irritated look and continued. It was slow work for him to philosophize in English.

"I prefer to think it is like this. Every nation goes through certain periods, just as an individual, except that a nation's periods take many centuries. When a people is in the childhood stage, it keeps close to the mother, the church. When it has arrived at the years of adolescence, it is ashamed of its old mother, and wants to show that it can get along by itself. When it gets older and more mature, it perhaps comes back to the old mother and respects her. I like to think of it like that. In that case, the Swedish people are in the state of adolescence now. But they live on the maternal inheritance."

"Do you mean that we Swedes are unchristian?" Mrs. Ternsten asked.

"Yes, in one way. But one can live quite fully on the maternal inheritance without giving thought as to where it comes from. It is seldom that Christian morality has been applied better than in today's Swedish community system. I mean social justice and the like. There is certainly a strong conscience and a great feeling of righteousness which is mobilized when something wrong has happened."

"Yes, but that doesn't only come from the church."

"No, it does not always come directly from the church. It comes from all possible directions. But it is Christian thoughts which are torn from their context."

Ternsten smiled.

"Well, it is, of course, good that you have your convictions. I do not doubt in any case that the church has a great duty in missionary work. You seem to have plenty of work to do."

"Well, it is no doubt more interesting to be a missionary than a pastor at home in Sweden. The church is in a flowering period here. Africa is going to need her intensively for several hundred years more."

Hlongwane nodded slowly and in agreement.

"But what do you think, umfundisi," he said. "It is not necessary that a people get into the rebellious adolescent period that you talked about, is it? Not all people are alike. We Africans have never lived like other people."

"No, I hope you are right," answered Örn. "That about Sweden in adolescence I said only to find an explanation to comfort myself. But I can't help being sorry that my own people are more indifferent than you Africans toward the church."

"But it is you who have taught us Christianity."

The discussion now continued between Örn and Hlongwane, and became even more theological. Eva listened with interest. It was not really polite of Frederick to pay attention only to his old friend whom he always had near by, but she did not like to interrupt them.

The guests in the meantime had a feeling that it was time for them to go.

Mrs. Ternsten got up.

"Well, dear Eva, we must be off at last. We have taken up too much of your time. Thank you for a very pleasant and interesting afternoon."



There was a general breaking up. Miss Kallengren used her newly acquired knowledge and nodded only once, quite slightly, when she said good-by to the black pastor.

Eva and Frederick remained standing alone and looked thoughtfully at the Cadillac as it rolled away toward the gate in the white wall which protected the mission station.

"Well, Ternstens, they do as much as they can in their position for the blacks," said Frederick. "And those two women, they only talk. Imagine if one's life were so simple and so free of problems."

"And uninteresting," added Eva. "At any rate, we can see Africa at close range all the time. I wouldn't want to be without that experience. My, how splendidly Hlongwane conducted himself today!"



## CHAPTER

# 5

IT WAS easy to see that Hlongwane felt unhappy and tormented. He had locked his door, and sat at his desk with a guilty look and counted money. He had just gotten his month's salary—about three hundred shillings—of which half was paid by means of offerings in Swedish churches, half of it from what the congregation in Edwaleni gathered in. Hlongwane was quite particular about worldly goods. He wanted to be orderly and secure in his financial affairs and have a little in reserve. He would have preferred to save a little and buy some land, and have his own house in the country to enjoy and to move into in his old age. But that was not possible. The law forbade Negroes to buy land. The only thing he could decide to do was to buy a cow now and then—about one every fourth year. He already owned four which he was proud of, and which were farmed out with a relative in the state's Negro reservation in Zululand. That investment was both a subject of joy and a thorn in his soul. He had a very bad conscience about being so well off—three quite large rooms and kitchen, food, and

clothes, plus some cows in reserve—while his people in the slum areas were in need. Theoretically he was prepared to sacrifice everything, whenever it was necessary. When he sat and read strict words from the Bible about self-sacrifice, he would look up and make sure—yes, I am prepared to give away everything—but to whom shall I give it? I must see to it that it really will be of good use, not wasted by some lazy fellow. The family Ndlovu—or Mkize—or Ndlela? No, there may always be someone who is worse off. Better to wait and see.

And Hlongwane waited—unhappy and with a bad conscience. He wanted badly to have a little reserve capital. He did not really have a very generous disposition. When he gave away money at any time, he did not do it with a smile. He could not help wondering if he could not himself have used the money in a more sensible and more economic way.

Poor Hlongwane did not have it as easy as Örn. The Swede had his fatherland's solid tradition to lean on—this about using dangerous and strong words from the Bible without any intention of following them. But the Negro came right from heathenism. For him Christianity was new, important, and serious. He did not know the white people's old technique of applying certain words from the Bible, and calmly passing by others. There was, of course, no white person who directly said that one should do so—it simply was done through a quiet and general agreement. The whole Bible is God's Word, and one should obey all of it, the white Christians said. But no one really meant it.

He should, however, have been able to learn it from

the white South Africans. For they were officially enthusiastic Christians. But that was seldom permitted to bother their conscience or influence their treatment of the colored races. There the treatment followed principles quite different from those of the Bible.

The difference among the missionaries was less noticeable. But it was there none the less. They had many roots in Sweden. Hlongwane had once carefully raised the question with Örn. "Jesus wants you to sell everything, and give to the poor," the black man said, "and that one should be like the lilies of the field and the birds in the heavens for whom the heavenly Father provides. And there are so many similar words in the Bible. He says that if someone takes your robe from you, give him your cloak also. And He says likewise that no one can be His disciple if he does not give up all he owns."

But Örn who at other times was full of clear directions and principles, had stood without answering. He did not dare say that one should not interpret God's Word that seriously, but neither could he on his part think of putting into practice such a revolutionary Christianity. He had been uncertain and uneasy. "Read your Bible yourself and do what you think best," he had said. "I cannot answer everything."

"But one cannot do missionary work like that," the black man thought. "You have to know what you have come to teach the heathens. You have to give straight answers."

Hlongwane had been persistent. "But, umfundisi, shouldn't I really leave my house and move out among the poor things in the slums?"

Örn had gotten into a complete cold sweat from uneasiness. How could he get along in the school without the black pastor? The thought was wonderful and impressive, but. . . .

"Well, I don't know," he answered. "You have to do what you think right. But as I look at it, we can't do without you here. I can manage the accounts all right and the building and the contacts with the white officials; but without you I can't keep the boys or the native teachers in order. You know your people, and I will never really be able to do that right. You are needed here."

Hlongwane pondered a while.

"But, umfundisi, shouldn't I at least let one or two families move in with me in the house. They live so crowded, and their houses are so poor and leaky."

The white man got up, and walked nervously back and forth in the room. He was afraid of standing in the way of God's Word. But still—what would happen if Hlongwane went all the way? Just think if he overdid and got tired of Christianity altogether?

"Well, I don't want to influence you at all," he said at last. "But you have to have a little space in your home anyway. The members of the congregation come to you, and want to talk undisturbed. And you must have peace to write your sermons."

Sermons about what? he thought. About complete and boundless self-sacrifice?

That was the end of the conversation. That day Hlongwane was disappointed in his white pastor. He only gave him the Bible to read, and then stood at a distance to see how it went. A father lends his boy a



fiery and untamed steed to ride on without knowing where the ride will end up. He does not ride the wild steed himself. He only rides in a wagon after it—hitching it together with a horse of another breed; a heavy and gentle work horse, which never runs faster than necessary—a worldly-wise beast.

Hlongwane decided not to talk with Örn about such things again. He could confess other things to his white fellow worker—unfaithfulness, sexual temptations, bickering at home, cowardice, pride, and the like. They were both in agreement about such and Örn gave him clear answers. But in some other things the missionary was no doubt not a Christian, but only white. Poor thing, he perhaps does not dare because of his wife, thought Hlongwane. But back in Sweden Christians were probably better, since they were strong enough in their faith to send people out even as far as Africa to convert others to their Christianity.

The Öorns had discussed the same subject later in the evening in the missionary's bedroom; but there Frederick had taken over Hlongwane's role, and Eva had to defend common sense reasoning.

"Eva, dear, shouldn't we sacrifice more? Shouldn't we live more among the natives and follow the word of the Bible uncompromisingly? We have it altogether too good."

But Eva was calm and critical as usual, and did not get upset.

"Do you know what, Frederick, I don't think so at all. You can't aim so high. You have to have a calm and pleasant home, otherwise you can't work well.

For that matter, we live much more simply and meagerly than a pastor's family in Sweden."

"Yes, that is true, but in any case it is a grand luxury compared to how people live in the location. That does not agree with the words of the Bible, you can't deny that."

"Yes, but you can't stretch it that far. And for that matter, it is better to work to improve the standard for the Negroes. It surely will not make them any happier, if we get poorer. They should get up to our standard, and not we down to theirs."

"What tiresome and old arguments you have. That is not a genuine and revolutionary Christianity. When are we going to begin to apply it?"

"Oh, we are doing as well as we can. In any case, I don't plan to let my children grow up in the slums. There must be other things to begin with, if we are to take Christianity more seriously. You can, for example, be a little more patient toward your own children and the Negro boys, too. And I could give more time to the schoolboys."

"Yes, that is true from a long view of it. But there is so much hate and misery in this country, that one should do something really radical and wholehearted, so that the blacks really understand that we mean business."

The conversation ended by Örn's turning his head to the other side of the pillow, and then lying sleepless and remorseful for a few hours. And during several days he went around with a troubled soul. Nothing more, of course, came of the conversation on his part. Everything remained as it had been.

Örn had gone through similar periods, more severe and more prolonged, at home in Sweden as a young student. He had been at Christian young people's meetings and listened to fiery appeals about consummate, burning, uncompromising, sacrificial Christianity, listened with a thumping heart to stories of Christianity as an eagle gospel whose claws people had clipped and whose bill had been straightened out, who had thus been made a tame and talkative crow. A new big era must come. Sacrifice even to death, if necessary. He had gone home quiet and impressed, and had seen visions, and dreamed about the day when he would be through with his studies and could himself go out and make the great and wholehearted contribution.

But then he had become a pastor and learned to know the fiery speakers intimately. They would sit in their easy chairs after their fervent lectures and talk about the meeting, glad to see how crowded the pews had been, and how impressed the boys had looked. Of course the speakers had style. They had been vigorous and zealous, and they had given up certain comforts for the sake of the work. But they lived well, and did not suffer in any way. They were quite fussy about pleasant homes and clever in the competition for good positions. Enthusiasm usually resulted in promotion. One could not call it dynamite. They could throw bombs recklessly from the pulpit, but they had taken off the heads of their own bombs, and had laid them on neat shelves for inspection.

He himself had given a few fiery lectures along the same style, had sat up late at night in his study and prepared, fervent in spirit, and had really meant what

he wrote. But he had not had the strength to swim against the sluggish stream of tradition. Nothing special came of it all. He had done as the rest.

Then he had learned to know well-fed deans and state church elders, and pious and rich free-church manufacturers, and had found that one can have a good reputation before people without taking the word of the Bible so painfully seriously.

Now he himself was in the role of the dull and complacent compromiser before Hlongwane, he thought. Here was a poor Negro who wanted to take the whole thing seriously, and the missionary stood in his way. A great and fantastic possibility: untouched raw material which Christianity could form as it wished—if only older, unsuccessful products did not stand beside it and demand to be copied. Örn almost felt like going home, so that he would not stand in the way in Africa.

He only hoped that the blacks would be independent enough to read the Bible with their own eyes—not with Swedish eyes—and see what really stood there. Perhaps they would find a kind of Christianity which was much better and truer than the one which the Swedes had molded in compromise between the teachings of the Bible and their own ideas. There were so many words which Hlongwane read and understood in an entirely different way from what Örn did, and made the missionary only listen in dumb wonderment. . . .

Hlongwane did not consider it any pleasure to sit there and count his money. He wanted to put aside some shillings for a new cow. But strict words of the Bible rang in his ears: "I was hungry, and ye gave me

no meat. Lay not up for yourself treasures upon earth. . . . Therefore take no thought, saying: What shall we eat, or: what shall we drink, or: wherewith shall we be clothed; for after all these things do the Gentiles seek. . . .”

The Bible lay on the desk, and looked at him accusingly. He got up and put it on a shelf, so that he could count the money in peace. But then he felt as though this was treason, and put it back again. He had never really gotten used to the words of the Bible. Sometimes they hit him like lashes.

“How should one really live?” he mumbled. “What is Christianity? When is it going to begin seriously?”

There were, of course, some who had lived as it says in the Bible—Paul, Francis, and perhaps some others. . . . But Örn was really no angel, although he was easy to get on with. . . .

Someone rapped on the door to Hlongwane’s study. He quickly put his money in the writing desk drawer, and arranged himself to greet people.

Four native men came in, looked around and sat down politely before they gave a word of greeting. They were stocky and serious, well dressed, and dignified in their behavior.

They carefully began to describe their errand with many circumlocutions and subterfuges. They had plans for a volunteer police force. Sikosana was the spokesman, a stately and steady shoemaker about fifty years of age. He was a genuine Zulu, dignified and old fashioned in his manner, but with a hard and persistent look. He was the youngest son of a Zulu chief who had died long ago, but since there were three brothers



who were ahead of him in line of succession, there was not much for him in Zululand, and he had moved to town and put up his own workshop. He was used to making decisions and being obeyed. He had never had to work for the white people, and his spirit was unbroken.

The three others, carpenter Mbatha, bicycle repairer Chamane, and builder Ndlovu who was also a churchwarden, all belonged, as did Sikosana, to the little group among the natives in the location who had independent work, and did not have to travel to and from the city every day and work in a factory. They were not broken down by waiting in bus lines and by white foremen's unfairness. They had their roots in Zululand, where the native ruler's word was to be reckoned with, and where order and good custom ruled. All four belonged to the congregation at Edwaleni, and now they had come to counsel with their pastor, who in many ways had the status of chief among the people.

"Umfundisi," said Sikosana, when he at last had gotten through the labyrinth of polite phrases and had come to the point. "We want to talk with you about a hard thing. There is anarchy and a thieves' world in the location. Those of us who want to live a calm and respectable life have to suffer daily. We can be attacked on the streets almost any time. These tsotsis force their way into our own homes and plunder. Every night there is someone murdered, and many have been knifed and maimed. The police don't do much. They don't know the tsotsis, and they arrest mostly decent people who have forgotten their pass-



port or have not had time to get out of the white part of town before eleven o'clock. They pursue us when we have gone against the laws of the whites which are written to repress us. But thieves go free. Our people cannot live like that. We have to do something."

The pastor nodded.

"You speak the truth correctly, son of a chief. Thieves rule. What have you thought about doing to get peace for our people?"

"Umfundisi, where police are not able to manage, there we must ourselves keep order. We have thought about calling together men who love law and justice, and who can go out on the streets at night and take the power from the tsotsis and punish them according to old Zulu custom. Isn't that so, you men?"

He looked appealingly at the other three. They nodded agreement one by one.

"Yes, it is so," confirmed the churchwarden Ndlovu. "We have made war clubs at home, and we plan to go out in groups of ten or twenty men, and teach the tsotsis to leave people alone. We can't live like hunted dogs on our streets any longer."

"But first we wanted to hear your idea, umfundisi," continued Sikosana. "You are the leader of the congregation. Is it right and wise to do as we plan?"

Hlongwane thought a minute before he answered.

"Yes, son of a chief, and you men, it is wise and right. I have hoped for this a long time. Our people must have peace. But I want to give you one piece of advice. Tell the police that you want to help them, otherwise you can get two enemies instead of one. And don't punish yourselves, but instead grab the thieves,

and take them to the police station. Otherwise you will be called lawbreakers."

"Umfundisi," answered Sikosana with suppressed exasperation, "we hear your words. You speak well. But the law in this country is not our friend. That is only to protect the white people. We won't gain anything by going to the police."

Hlongwane sat quietly a minute. Then he spoke with great dignity:

"You are partly right, son of a chief, partly not. There are many laws which are only meant to strengthen the white people's power. But the law is also against what is called wrong among our own people. It forbids stealing and murder and plundering. And in that respect we should stand on the side of the law. We should not reject that which is right simply because it is written in the white man's law."

Sikosana looked at the others.

"What do you say, men? Does the father of the congregation speak what is right?"

The three looked obstinate and sullen. They had no desire to work with the police. That would spoil the fun of the whole thing. They wanted to show that they themselves were capable of something without the help of the whites. And they wanted to have their own trials in Zulu fashion. But neither did they want to go against the pastor. Without his backing, it would be hard to get the congregation to follow along.

"Yes," said the churchwarden Ndlovu at last, "it is probably as umfundisi says. It will probably be best to take our prisoners to the police."

With that the errand was settled. But the four men

remained sitting a long time, and talked about other things for the sake of politeness, and so that all discontent could have time to disappear.

The same evening churchwarden Ndlovu came to Enoch Zondi as the last one to be drafted into the voluntary police. Ndlovu saw that Zondi was a weak man, and not much to depend on, but it was necessary to take as many people along as possible, and thus to get patrols that were numerically strong.

"Zondi," he said, "you who come from the Zulu district, you must go with us, too. Your own son has been assaulted on the streets, and some day they perhaps will come and plunder your house."

Zondi was not at all keen about going out on the streets at night. He was tired at night after work and wanted to sleep, and above all he was scared to death at the thought of getting into a fight. He turned and squirmed, and tried to think up some reason to get out of it. But in that little hut there was no ally who would stand behind him. Selina was immediately all excited about Ndlovu's proposal and, caught between her and the churchwarden, he gave in and promised to appear. He was to have a cudgel with him and a piece of iron pipe. He shuddered at the thought, but Selina would in any case finally have gotten him to it, that he knew. And he could, of course, always try to keep behind the others.

A few nights later the patrols began their action. After a little while they had clashed with gangsters in several streets, and wild battles began to take place. But the guards won everywhere. People streamed out of their houses all around, when they understood what

it was all about, and helped to beat up the tsotsis, and were wild with enthusiasm in being able at last to take revenge for all attacks. They gave out shrill war cries, danced war dances, and battled like good Zulu fighters. They had not had so much fun for a long time. Gradually all the streets were full of people, and the tsotsis who escaped being caught had to run a gauntlet of stones, becoming bloody, and bruised. When the streets were cleaned of tsotsis, the patrols continued into houses. Known robbers were hunted up and thrashed, or dragged away to the police station.

The battle continued until toward morning, and when it was time for the workers to go to the city, the location looked entirely different from the usual. No frightened faces looked out from doors to see if the coast was clear. The people moved freely at the bus stop, shouted and laughed and called to one another. That day the tsotsis were missing on the buses. Workers who used to sit afraid and suppressed in a corner, talked and waved their hands, and sang and acted like school children on a trip.

Churchwarden Ndlovu's patrol with Enoch Zondi and eight other Zulus was the first to come to the police station with captives. They had gone directly to a house where three known thieves lived, and had taken them by surprise. They had not dared beat them too much, since the thieves had to look somewhat presentable when they were shown to the police, but they had kicked them in the legs and in the head, because black and blue marks do not show there so much. Even Zondi had gathered courage and kicked a man in the back while two others held him. Three

men took off their belts and tied the hands of the captives behind their backs. They walked last themselves holding up their trousers. Right in the middle of the group went Zondi, tallest and most frightened.

They marched into the police station, proud of their victory and enthusiastic about their prey. Ndlovu, who led the campaign, went up to the police sergeant's desk and held up his hand fearlessly in Zulu greeting, not cringing or humbly, as is usual in front of the police.

"Nkosana, Sir, we have captured three thieves and murderers and brought them to you. We will leave them to you to punish. Here they are!"

He gave a majestic gesture with his hand.

The white policeman stared speechless and amazed at the patrol before he grasped the situation. Then he rubbed his hands together with satisfaction and laughed. This was something quite new. The Negroes themselves were beginning to help to keep order. This opened up new perspectives. Perhaps a wave of obedience to the law. Less difficulty for the police.

Hendrik van Buren and a couple of other constables had come in to see what this was all about, and the sergeant ordered them to put handcuffs on the three tsotsis. Van Buren recognized Enoch Zondi and nodded at him, amazed to find the poor old thing in such a role of a hero. Ndlovu had to report about the action of the patrols to the sergeant, who listened with gracious approval. The black churchwarden stood there erect and smiled. Now he did not regret that he had taken the pastor's advice.

Then a report had to be written about the accused.



Name, address, and passport number were written down, and then Ndlovu was asked:

"Well, what is your complaint against them?"

"They are robbers, *nkosana*, they are about the worst ones to sneak around at night and assault people. They have killed several. They live in a dishonorable way."

"Did you yourselves see them assault anyone?"

"No, *nkosana*, not tonight, they had not had time to get out. But they usually do that. We took them in their house."

The sergeant scratched his head, and looked at his colleagues.

"This isn't as good as I had thought," he said.

He turned to Ndlovu again.

"But you must have proof, you understand? You must yourselves have seen them rob people, or else you must get witnesses. We can't take them just because you say they are robbers and murderers."

Ndlovu looked crestfallen. Then he straightened up with dignity.

"*Nkosana*, we know our own people. We *know* that they are thieves. We can swear to that. I don't lie."

The sergeant shrugged his shoulders. You could have guessed that it would be like this. One can never get any benefit from these black fellows. They are like children.

"I don't mean that you lie," he said. "But you must have something definite as a complaint about them, you understand. They have to have assaulted a certain definite person at a certain definite time and



place. Did you find any knives or other weapons on them?"

Ndlovu's courage began to sink. Didn't the white police want to punish the thieves? Wasn't this their work? Was the pastor wrong?

"No, nkosana, we found no weapons on them. They hide them well, and we surprised them before they had time to get them."

The sergeant pushed the paper from him, and leaned back in his chair.

"Well, then we can't do anything," he said. "We will have to release the prisoners again. Get proper proof the next time you drag people here."

Tired and bitter, Ndlovu looked from one policeman to the other in the room. Wasn't there anyone here who understood what was right, no one who could see the difference between honorable people and law breakers?

The two other young police laughed with an air of superiority, but van Buren looked bothered. This was bad. The patrols were decent Zulu people from the country. He knew the kind. It was too bad to lose their help. Now they would only leave, insulted and distrustful.

The three robbers had overheard the conversation with increasing interest. When the police had taken off the handcuffs one of the tsotsis looked around triumphantly, and began to talk. Now it was his turn. He knew the law. It was not the first time he had had reason to work with it.

"Sergeant, I want to make a complaint against these men here. They have illegally forced their way into

my house and have committed trespass. And then they mistreated us, and took us here illegally. I request that they be arrested."

The sergeant suddenly became furious. There had to be some limit to the folly. Let criminals go free, and arrest honorable people. It was bad enough not to be able to punish these tsotsis. He had a good mind to take them aside and give them one of those very private beatings without any witnesses which now and then occur at police stations. But that would not do now after all he had said to Ndlovu about the law.

He nodded to the other constables.

"Gooi hulle uit," "throw them out," he said in Afrikaans.

The constables did so. Van Buren came around the desk with a couple of quick steps and threw the nearest tsotsi out the door, and gave him a good kick in the rear, so that he fell headlong down the steps. It felt good to give Ndlovu and his patrol a little satisfaction in this way.

Then the ten men in the patrol filed away with gloomy countenance. Outside the door they began to mumble protests, and as they got farther away from the police station their murmurings rose to bitter mutterings.

Van Buren looked after them thoughtfully. "Here we threw away a good chance to get order in the location," he said. "Our laws don't work. Why don't we let the blacks rule each other in their own way? Then they would soon teach the gangsters to behave."

"And what will happen then?" another one broke in. "If they have their own laws, they will want their

own leaders and their own republic, and then they will kick you out because you have white skin. Give them a finger, and they will take your whole hand."

"Oh well, that's theory and talk. But we are powerless against the gangs. This wasn't good. Ndlovu and the others are decent people who could have been of help to us."

Ndlovu met some other patrols who were on their way to the police station. "Don't go there," he warned. "The police won't do a thing with the tsotsis. They only release them, and then shame us. They are on the tsotsis' side, and not on ours. We'll never go there again. The pastor can say what he wishes."

The others did not seem surprised. They had not expected co-operation from the police.

"Can we do what we want with the tsotsis now then?" they asked.

"Yes, judge them and punish them in Zulu fashion," answered Ndlovu. "Now we will take the law in our own hands."

Willing cudgels were raised on all sides, and the cries of the thieves for help filled the air.

Van Buren was sent out from the police station to see what the noise was. When the Negroes saw the blond constable with his big pistol in his belt, they stopped beating the men and just waited, quiet and sulky.

When van Buren came up to them, and understood what they were doing, he pretended to see nothing, and wandered on looking in another direction. Then

he made a turn, and went back to the police station to report that all was quiet.

When he passed Ndlovu's patrol and recognized old Zondi there, he nodded hesitatingly at him and said in Zulu, "Good night, Zondi."

The next day the leading group—Sikosana, Ndlovu, Chamane, and Mbatha—had a council of war. Bitter words were spoken about the white men who were so hard and callous when it meant their own interests, but who did not want to lift a finger to help the blacks in their need. But van Buren's behavior had saved much of the white people's prestige: it was taken to mean that the police did not care to do anything themselves, but that they at least watched with indulgent eyes the attempts of the patrols to keep order. No one would believe that there were legal obstacles to intervention by the police. The white people always had some queer book with paragraphs to draw on, or point to, when it suited them. And, after all, the white people themselves had thought up all the laws.

But they did not consider themselves stopped from taking action as it had been planned at the beginning. It did not pay to take the pastor's advice, and bring the prisoners to the police. They should judge here by Zulu custom and Sikosana, son of the chief, should be the judge.

That evening the patrols went into action again. But the tsotsis kept under cover now, and the streets which were otherwise in ill-omened silence by night, bustled with Negroes who celebrated with high spirits their

victory over the power of the gangsters. Fear had lifted, and strained nerves could rest. The patrols were the heroes of the day, and were invited into homes everywhere, and offered beer, and asked to tell about their bravados. As the beer and the happiness went to their heads, imagination began to play, bringing memories of stories of heroic deeds at old-time council fires, with dreams of a new era of might and freedom for the Zulus.

Sikosana and his three friends were not enticed into drinking and dreaming and forgetting the call of duty. The day before they had hunted in vain for the basuto natives, Motlaung and Mofokeng, two unknown and brutal tsotsis leaders, who specialized in killing people and selling their work permits. The patrols had taken one of their followers, and had beaten him until he told why the leaders were not in evidence the day before. They had ferreted out information about the action that was planned, and had sent out all their men to fight and to try to chase the patrols from the streets. They themselves had stood on the sidelines and watched, dressed up like women. When the battle was lost, they had hidden in one of their beer parlors, and there they still sat and waited for better times.

Sikosana gathered twenty men, and marched out to the beer shack. They did not have to surround the house, since there was only one doorway and no windows. If the gangster leaders sat inside the tin hut they could not get out.

The patrols wanted to make the most of this opportunity, and to make the meeting with the gangsters a dramatic play in Zulu style. They formed a half circle

before the door, and began to dance old Zulu war dances. Age-old battle songs, which were never sung in the location, resounded with thundering basses, now and then interrupted by wild high notes, and war clubs were swinging in the air. The formation before the door was in a semicircle, which was the tradition of the native regiments. Sikosana stood in the middle of the arc, dark and serious, with his arms crossed, and looked straight at the closed door. People came running from all sides, the crowd thickened behind the warriors, and at last the ground throbbed from the rhythm of the stamping.

Then the door was carefully opened and two full-grown women came out, bent and leaning heavily on canes, with large scarves tied on their heads. They tried quietly to sneak away along the wall with their faces turned away.

Sikosana held up his hand, and the dancing stopped. The song died out gradually in the crowd until the whole mass of people stood dead quiet and stared at the leader.

Sikosana spoke. His voice was calm and ill omened.

"You revered mothers, where are you going?"

The women did not answer, but tried desperately to force their way through the line. But the men stood their ground as though hewn in stone, shoulder to shoulder, as once had been done in the battle formations in the days of King Cetshwayo and Prince Dabulamanzi. They were being amused beyond measure. To themselves they pictured Sikosana dressed in kingly leopard skins instead of in a tattered European suit.



"You mothers, let us see your revered faces. Don't let your scarves hide your beauty."

The two disguised murderers did not bother to dissemble any longer. They straightened up and rushed back into the tin hut and shut the door. No one moved to restrain them. The situation was too important to be spoiled by foolishness and hurry.

"Motlaung and Mofokeng, come out," thundered Sikosana's voice. "It is I, Sikosana, the chieftain's son who commands. It is much better for you to obey."

There was dead silence a minute in the semicircle. In the background were heard voices of people who came and wanted to know what was happening.

Then the door opened again, and the two basuto Negroes came out without their scarves. They had lost all courage, and stood in front of Sikosana without a word. Zulus on the warpath are not to play with.

"Take off your clothes," continued Sikosana monotonously. He continued standing with his arms folded.

Cringing and shaking, the men pulled off their women's clothing, until they stood in only dirty underclothes.

"Mofokeng and Motlaung, your power is at an end. You have murdered and pained my people. You stinking hyenas, you dirty dogs, you baboons, you grave robbers, today revenge will come upon you. Here stand men who have lost sons by your hands. Their spears are thirsting for your blood."

"Listen, listen, the son of the chief has spoken," muttered the people behind Sikosana.

Mofokeng made a feeble attempt to defend himself.

"We have not murdered anyone. There is no proof. We want to go to the police station and discuss this business there."

"Chamane," said Sikosana without turning his head, "teach them to speak truthfully and with respect."

Chamane went up and gave them a few blows in the face with the handle of his war club. Neither of them dared to move or defend himself. Then he turned his club toward their chests and beat them to the ground, one at a time, before he went back and stood in the line.

"Get up."

The men crawled up slowly, and looked around desperately for help. Then they began to whine.

"Have mercy on us, Sikosana. We have not meant to do harm to anyone."

"Did you have mercy when you forced your way into poor people's homes and knifed them? Did you have mercy toward widows and children? Did you have mercy toward people who wanted to live in calm and peace? You dirty jackals, you talk about mercy?"

"There is no proof against us, O son of a chief. There is no one who witnesses against us."

"You can talk like that in the white people's court. But here we will judge according to the Zulu laws. What all people know, that holds good."

"We have only done this because we were poor, Sikosana. The white people have taken everything from us natives. We are black, just as you."

"We all have it just as hard, we who stand here. But still we have not plundered the poor and murdered the innocent."

"But we have . . ."

"Quiet. You have talked enough."

Sikosana now turned for the first time to the men in the semicircle behind him. According to Zulu custom they had to have their say, each in turn before the chief pronounced judgment.

"Banumzane, leaders, what do you say? How shall we judge these men?"

Mbatha, who stood nearest the wall, began.

"They are guilty. Kill them, that is my word."

Chamane continued:

"Yes, they are guilty. They must die. But first all those whom they have plundered should come forth and take revenge."

Then it was churchwarden Ndlovu's turn. He spoke slowly and hesitatingly.

"Yes, Sikosana, they are guilty, they are guilty. None of us wants to set them free. But we are Christian people, and we can't kill. Let us beat them as much as they can stand without really killing them."

There was a dissenting noise in the back row. Ndlovu had thrown in a thought that did not belong to Zulu law. It was at cross purposes, and irritated and upset them. The Bible was good as a striking weapon against the white rulers. But it must not stand in the way of the natives' wishes.

The next man spoke:

"Yes Sikosana, they are guilty. And they must die. Ndlovu is wrong. The white men hang those who murder. It isn't our fault that they have taken power from us, and don't let us be the judge. We don't murder anyone. We judge fairly. Ndlovu speaks wrongly."

Shouts of approval from all directions. The word went around the semi-circle, and man after man said the same thing: "They are guilty. They must die."

Sikosana stood quietly a long time before he gave the final word. A Zulu chief must not be too hasty. What he says must be unimpeachably right. From the beginning he had taken it for granted that both men would be beaten to death, but Ndlovu's words had made him uncertain. He was not convinced that the churchwarden was right, but, nevertheless, perhaps Christianity demanded that he let them get by with their life.

But was he not the judge today, and did he not have the right to sentence to death? But he was not altogether sure and, under these circumstances he did not want to judge. He stood and pondered with troubled expression.

He was enough of a chief to dare act against the people's will.

He began speaking:

"They are guilty. We shall beat them, but not kill them. I have spoken."

A mumbling of discontent was heard farthest back in the crowd. But the men in the circle were quiet. They lived in old Zululand that night, and their respect for their chief was great.

Then Sikosana nodded and the ring around the men closed in. One after the other went to work with his club, until both the tsotsis lay bloody and senseless on the ground. Then Sikosana gave the order to cease. The men formed a line, two abreast, and marched away, serious and silent.

The crowd remained quiet until the patrol had disappeared around a corner. Then a mumbling began which rose to a storm of angry voices.

"Shall we let the rascals live? Shall they continue to murder our sons? Can't we get revenge? Kill them! Kill them!"

One man in the mob pulled out his knife and rushed up to the two senseless tsotsis, and with a shrill cry stabbed them in the chest. Several others followed, and when the mob at last scattered, the bodies remained lying on the ground, mutilated beyond recognition.

A couple of skinny dogs came up, and began to sniff at them. The street lay empty and still.

It was quiet and peaceful in the location for a few weeks. People slept undisturbed in their houses at night and went to work without fear. It was no longer necessary to sit behind barred doors when darkness fell, and many took the chance to repair and clean up their houses in the evenings. The location began to have another look. The patrols still continued at night, but no one dared defy them and those gangsters who were lucky enough to escape being beaten to death moved to other Negro suburbs of Johannesburg, where the hunt went on undisturbed.

But the news of the action of the patrols spread wide throughout the country. The natives in the many locations around Johannesburg were pleased, and experienced a malicious glee that it was their own people, and not the white police, who had been able to break the power of the gangsters in Stoneville. It had already been quite calm in some of the locations where



the government had built decent brick houses for the Negroes, and patrols for order began to be organized here and there in some of the troubled slum locations. Tired and tormented factory workers began to live and travel without fear. But they thought and said something else, too: When we ourselves can keep order much better than the white people, why can't we govern ourselves also? Why should the white people make laws for us, and be our rulers and own everything? They always lay the blame on the fact that we don't amount to anything. But now we have shown that we are able.

Among the white people—those few who bothered to trouble themselves about the Negroes and their problems—opinions were divided. "This is right and good," the more liberal ones said. "Let the poor things take care of their locations, if they can manage it. It is a shame that we have not done more for them and provided decent houses and streets and buses. But we can at least let them try themselves now. And these black gangsters are a danger for our own security, too. It is really great that the Negroes themselves have taken hold of them."

"This must be stopped," said the others who were in the majority and whose thoughts were more according to those of the South African. "If the Negroes are permitted to take charge of the police service and laws, and do as they please in the locations, then they will soon take charge of everything else there. And then the locations will be small independent black republics, and the next step will be that they will demand to own land and to vote, and some day perhaps they will



march against the white center of Johannesburg. Then the revolution is started, and it will be the end for the Europeans in this country. These self-made police must be suppressed before it is too late."

The reasoning was logically unimpeachable. It rested securely on the South African principle that the white people must rule.

From official quarters it was maintained that the patrols had acted outside the law, that they had forced their way into private homes without permission, that they had punished people without court and jury, and that they appeared scornful and insubordinate toward the police. The foundations of law were shaking. The sanctity of the law had to be protected. A government decree was issued that those who without permission assumed the role of police and arrested people would be fined up to one hundred pounds, or imprisoned.

A cry of rage rose up in the locations when the decision of the government was announced. Bitter words were uttered about the ruling race. The decree was construed—certainly incorrectly—that the white people were on the side of the gangsters, and that they were willing to see decent Negroes tortured and harassed and plundered. Nothing had happened for many years that had so shaken the natives' faith in the white people. Those who worked on the idea of co-operation and agreement between races found it all the more difficult to be heard.

But the black policemen were highly satisfied with the decision. Their reputation had fallen in the same relation as the praise of the patrols had risen. People did not take them seriously, they were ridiculed and

scoffed at, and they were called incompetent quislings and weak errand boys. Now their shadow existence would end, and people would ask them for help again.

The bands of tsotsis were naturally most triumphant. They had lived in misery and fear, but now good times were dawning. They were not especially afraid of the regular police. They were few in number and their uniforms betrayed them from far off. They also could not punish without proof, and the tsotsis could hire lawyers at the white people's courts.

The patrols in Stoneville were bewildered and downhearted, and Hlongwane was in despair. They could not believe their ears. Would the power of the law-breakers really spread loose again? They sent one more patrol to see if the authorities really were serious. The Negro constables reported this immediately, and a truck of white police rushed out and arrested the whole Zulu patrol. With this their work was definitely at an end.

Gradually, the tsotsis gained the power in the streets again. The number of murders and thefts rose day by day, night by night, and soon all was the same as formerly. Fear and despair descended over the location, and people lived as they used to before the son of the chief began his fight. But there was more bitterness than before. South Africa continued on its desolate way.

Churchwarden Ndlovu sat in a corner of pastor Hlongwane's study and spoke:

"Umfundisi, what shall we do now? Our people are plagued and poor. The white people own everything and they rule alone. They don't help us against

the lawbreakers, and now they don't let us even defend ourselves. What shall we do? Just sit and despair and hate? Or begin to fight the white, too? But that does not pay. We have no weapons and they have airplanes and cannon."

Hlongwane did not answer. He only walked back and forth in the room with a heavy heart.

"Umfundisi," continued Ndlovu, "why should all this befall our people? What serious sins have we committed to be punished like this? Why is God angry with us? We have no doubt sinned, we have no doubt been cruel and false, but other people have been the same, too, and they can live in freedom and happiness. Why are not the white people also punished for their sins? Why should just our people suffer? Is there a curse on us?"

Hlongwane stood still and opened his mouth to speak. But his thoughts and words were not adequate; they faded away in emptiness, and his soul was numb and heavy. He closed his mouth and began to walk back and forth again.

"Umfundisi, what do you say? Is God just to let us suffer like this? Or what has He said in His Word that we should do when we are tortured, and wicked people have power over us? You have said that the Bible knows all things and teaches us how we should live. What does it say to us now?"

Hlongwane tried to think again, but it was only empty and dark within him.

"I don't know," he answered.

"But umfundisi, you are our pastor. The people wait for your word. 'We shall listen on Sunday how

the pastor will explain this,' they say. They were bitter against you when you wanted us to work together with the police. But now they want to hear you again. What do you have to give them?"

"I don't know. What would you say yourself?"

"I? I have not studied. It is you who are the pastor," answered Ndlovu a little sharply. He was not so respectful when they were alone together.

"I know that," answered Hlongwane, irritated. "But you demand impossible things of me. I can't keep up with all this. Read the Bible yourself and see what it says. You are literate."

But that was the way Örn had answered him at one time, by which he himself had been disillusioned. It was not right to push the burden onto someone else. He sighed and turned to Ndlovu again.

"You perhaps are right, Ndlovu. I will try to answer the congregation on Sunday."

"Yes, you must," answered the churchwarden in determined tone of voice. "We expect that of you."

"And you, are you . . . nothing . . . ?"

Hlongwane flared up, but restrained himself again. Then he went and sat down in the chair at his writing desk. He was tired and irritated.

"I am going to have evening prayers with my wife now," he said. "Do you want to remain and take part?"

The churchwarden nodded, and assumed an expression of pious waiting. He clasped his hands over his stomach, rocked slowly back and forth, and now and then gave his pastor a look of almost doglike attachment. Hlongwane noticed it, and felt bothered. This evening he was not in a mood to be flattered. That

pretentious devotion was more a burden than a help.

The Bible lay by his hand on the desk and he opened it at the bookmark. It was in Revelation, the chapter about the great white host before the throne, those who had triumphed and come through the great tribulation. Not just tonight, thought Hlongwane. We are still standing in the middle of tribulation, and we need advice about how to act now.

He turned to the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and looked up the Sermon on the Mount, read a few words quietly and nodded to himself. And then, without looking up, he called to his wife and continued to read. He did not want to look at Ndlovu, who was like a leech and a weight on his soul tonight.

Nomusa Hlongwane came in quietly, curtsied to the churchwarden, and sat down in the opposite corner of the room. Her plump body glided softly and quietly, and her large bosom rose and fell in noiseless breathing. She always kept in the background, and never made any undue noise. Her remarks in a conversation were such that no one remembered what she had said. One only remembered her everlasting, contented chuckle. She did not need to be anxious; her husband was there, and he took responsibility for all that was difficult. It never paid to discuss anything with her. Hlongwane had to think alone as in a vacuum in his home.

In his thoughts he tried to shake off both of them; they only waited for him, and depended upon him. He began to read loudly and fumblingly.

"You have heard that it was said. 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not



resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."

We have never tried this with the tsotsis, thought Hlongwane. We have beaten them and taken back our belongings and hated them. Well, why have we not thought to do as the Bible says?

He continued slowly and thoughtfully.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

He stopped reading and began to ponder again. The other two looked at him wonderingly, but did not dare to say anything. The words had only glided over the flat surface of their souls. They were accustomed to listening to the readings in a spiritless, good-natured, and sleepy fashion.

Well, why have we never tried this, wondered Hlongwane. We have never really followed the Bible. We should love these tsotsis. We should go to them. That is the way. We have only been afraid and angry and tried to defend our own. I will take my money in my pocket, and go alone in their midst and be their friend. And then I will tell Örn that it is possible to follow the Bible. . . .

The three of them sat quiet a while after the eve-



ning prayers. Then Hlongwane got up and went around the room with quick steps.

"Ndlovu, now I know what we will do. I know the answer. Do you remember some words from the Bible which say: 'Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves'?"

Ndlovu had a look of expectancy.

"Yes, umfundisi, what do you mean?"

"And didn't you hear what I read from the Bible? There was the answer."

"Mn, yes," said Ndlovu fumblingly. "What you read was of course good and edifying."

He had not listened.

"Yes, and I am going to begin this very evening. Do you know where there is any gang of robbers?"

"Yes, in Mlotshwa's house, for example, at the corner of Dlomo and Mfeka Streets, in the red tin house. They hang out there. But what do you mean, umfundisi? Shall I help you and fetch the others?"

Hlongwane examined him carefully. Then he shook his head.

"No, Ndlovu, I have to do this alone. I'll tell you on Sunday what happened. We won't talk about it any more tonight."

Ndlovu looked bewildered and disappointed. Then he got up and went toward the door.

"Well, then it is best that I go home now. Good-by, umfundisi."

He looked injured and offended. The pastor acted so strangely.

Hlongwane went hastily back to his desk and sat down.

"Go to bed, Nomusa," he said in a friendly way. "I have work to do tonight."

She nodded to him, got up quietly, and glided out again. As soon as she had closed the door he took out a key, unlocked a desk drawer, and took out his money. From an old habit he began to count it, but when halfway through he ceased counting and smiled. Then he stuffed it in his pocket and went toward the door. But he stopped halfway, went to the desk again, and put back ten shillings in the drawer to have in reserve. He remained sitting a minute with wrinkled brow. Then he slowly stretched forth his hand, and put the ten shillings back in his pocket again. He got up for the second time, and went out through the door, locked it, and wandered with rapid steps toward the gate which led out toward the location.

The night was warm and clear. In the distance shimmered the lights from the white man's metropolis, but between it and the mission station lay Stoneville location like a dark and quiet belt.

The light shone in Örn's office window. Hlongwane looked toward it with a smile. I will have something to tell you tomorrow, he thought. You are going to learn how it is to do missionary work.

He half ran through the dark alleys toward the house that Ndlovu had described. Hope I am not robbed before I get there, he thought pantingly. That would spoil it all.

He stopped at Mlotshwa's house and caught his breath, and listened to the buzz of men's voices inside. It is good that they have not had time to go out yet, he thought. Then he smiled to himself and knocked.

It became absolutely quiet in the house. The knocking could only mean one of two things: that a police patrol had come to raid the house, or that the local patrols had begun to ravage again. It would not be thinkable that anyone else would dare come into a robbers' nest.

"Who is it?" asked a sharp voice.

In his imagination Hlongwane saw them draw their knives and get prepared to fight. His heart began to thump, but he pulled himself together and tried to answer calmly.

"It is a friend of yours, Pastor Hlongwane from Edwaleni mission station."

The door opened, a Negro stuck out his head, and stared in amazement at the pastor. Then he looked around to see if there were any other men in back.

"May I come in?" asked Hlongwane.

The Negro opened the door and let him in, too overcome to be able to speak. But as soon as the pastor had gotten in he locked the door and blockaded it with his broad shoulders.

Inside stood ten other men on the earthen floor around a kerosene lamp. There were several beer mugs on the floor, and the men had evidently sat and fortified themselves before the evening's plundering. They had their knives in readiness just as Hlongwane had thought. They stared at the pastor in speechless amazement.

At last their leader broke the silence.

"What do you want, pastor?"

Hlongwane's feeling of certain victory had disappeared, and fear came creeping up from behind. But

he gathered himself together, and tried to look undaunted. Now it was a matter of life and death.

"You men," he said, "I have come to you as a friend. I know that you are thieves, and that you live by plundering my people. I have been afraid of you myself when I have gone on the streets of Stoneville. But the God Almighty whom I serve has said that I should love you anyway. I have no grudge against you any longer, and I am here to help you. I have come alone and without weapons, and I have taken all my money with me in my pocket to show you that I depend on you. My house at Edwaleni will always be open for you, and you can visit me when you want without fear."

Now he had said it. Now it was only to leave the rest to the Lord. His confidence began to come back, and he stretched out his hand with a smile.

"Mlotshwa," he said, "isn't this your house? May I sit down? I only know you by your appearance, but I want to be your friend."

It was absolutely quiet in the room for a minute. No one found anything to say. A fight between powers was being waged, and the outcome was uncertain.

But then someone laughed a coarse, mean laugh, and soon all joined in. With this laugh they shook off Hlongwane's words, and regained their old familiar thoughts. They continued to laugh a long time to convince themselves and to assure one another that they had not been impressed by the pastor's words.

"He is trying to convert us; he wants us to be Sunday school children, Ha, ha!"

"It's the patrols who have sent him out to bluff us

when they themselves can't attack us. Now they are afraid of us, and are trying to think up something new, ha, ha, ha!"

"That is the usual trick of the white capitalists, they want to calm the people with religion. And then they send us a pastor who is a native and think we will swallow it more readily, ha, ha, ha!"

A storm of foul language came from all corners, but no one touched Hlongwane yet. They had not completely shaken off their respect for him. They knew what a strong position he had in his congregation and how people regarded him as a chieftain.

Hlongwane noticed the uncertainty in their laughs and taunts, and he felt that the battle was not yet completely lost. He began to be calm in his soul, and to have sympathy for the poor men. They were not strong men with conviction, they were afraid and dumb children who tried to calm one another.

He raised his hand like a chieftain.

"You men, let me speak. I have something to say to you."

It became quiet again. They let him speak, but they kept their leering smiles as a shield. One of them sat down and began to drink out of a beer mug as a further shield.

"You men, you speak the truth when you say that I am trying to convert you. You are unhappy and alone and people hate you."

"Ha, ha, ha, we are unhappy and alone, ha, ha!"

"Wait, let me speak. But you are wrong when you say that I am the lackey of the white capitalists. Why should they send me? Who is it you plunder? It isn't



the rich white people. It is our own poor black people. Wasn't it the white police who prevented our patrols from punishing you? No one has sent me here, no one knows that I am here. I have come because my God has taught me to love you. I am alone and without weapons. I am in your hands. I want to be your friend."

Some of the leers faded away, and the whole group stood nonplused in uncanny silence. This was absurd, new, and curious. It did not fit into anything they had heard or seen or thought.

Mlotshwa was host in the place, and the leader of the gang. He felt the danger in the air. The pastor must not come and spoil it for them. Mlotshwa took courage and deadened his thoughts like one does when one forces oneself to jump into cold water from a high place, because people around are looking on. He grabbed a mug, filled it with beer, and threw it in the pastor's face.

"We are generous, see, we serve you beer."

Hlongwane looked terribly silly as he stood there and wiped the sticky, thick beer out of his eyes. It ran down his face, messed up his clothes, and the smell went up in his nose so that he sniffed.

They began to laugh again, mean and irresistible.

"Say your piece over again," continued Mlotshwa. "We are listening patiently. We will offer you more beer if you want it."

Hlongwane could not say anything. He stood and wiped himself in dumb despair. Mlotshwa had won the battle, and was the master of the situation. The noise started up again, and the men sat down and



drank heavily out of their beer mugs to celebrate the precious situation. One man, Dube, remained standing and watched the door.

Mlotshwa sat down and rested on his laurels. The tsotsi who sat beside him began a whispering conversation with him.

"What shall we do with the cleric? Shall we cut his throat?"

"Don't be idiotic," answered Mlotshwa. "If the people find out that we have killed their pastor, nothing can save us. Then we will have half the city on us tomorrow. But we will mark him a little, so that he doesn't come here and disturb us again."

He raised his voice.

"Dube, the preacher said that he had all his money on him. See if he is lying."

The Negro at the door went up and began to feel in the pastor's pockets. Hlongwane had now wiped the beer out of his face and had gathered himself together again. An unchristianlike anger began to rise up in him. He grabbed hold of Dube's hands, held them in a fast grip, and looked him straight in the eye. Dube became raging mad at the resistance, jerked his hands away, and pulled out his knife. Hlongwane did not move an inch, but he let his hands fall. Love your enemies, he thought. That was why I came. I will spoil everything, if I resist.

"All right, Dube," he said. "Do as you are told. You can take what you want."

Dube put his knife back in his pocket and stepped nearer, began to fumble in the pastor's pockets, and pulled out their contents. Some pencils and paper, a

brown handkerchief, and eighty shillings in money. He went up to the leader with the money, and threw the rest of the things on the floor. Mlotshwa immediately stuffed a couple of ten shilling notes in his pocket, and threw the rest to the others who sat in a circle on the floor.

"Take this money, men. We have just as much right to it as he does. The pastor has stolen it from the collections of poor people anyway."

Now he had hit upon a real good line. There was general laughter and acclamations of approval. Angry looks were turned toward Hlongwane.

"Yes, he steals, he like us, even much more than we. He is a thief who takes money from poor people. And then he comes and preaches to us."

An icy shiver went through Hlongwane. Now he knew that the battle was lost. The fellows had restored their faith in the idea that they were right. But he tried to salvage what could be saved.

"You men, I have not stolen money. Church people give me my salary voluntarily. It is pay for honorable work. I work all the time for your people, and to keep your boys in school. This is all my wife and I have left to live on this month. But I will give it to you, if you need it more than I do."

"Nobody has asked you for your permission," cried Mlotshwa scornfully. "We plan to take it anyway. Listen to him, he is generous when we already have his money, ha, ha!"

The atmosphere was hard and mean in the men's circle. A wave of despair passed over Hlongwane. What have I done wrong? he thought. They listened

to me before. They are not bad all the way through. Dear Lord, you have sent me to do this. You must help me now. I really love them, I am not angry with them longer. . . . Shall I speak and say to them again that I am their friend, and that I am going home now? But then they will think that I want to escape. I must stay with them, no matter what happens to me.

The men had been drinking heavily during the entire evening, and now the beer began to work. They became even more exhilarated and high-spirited.

"Priest, you shall do the Zulu dance for us, you shall entertain us," yelled Mlotshwa. "Take off your clothes! You aren't ashamed to stand naked before us?"

A roar of laughter. A couple of tsotsis rushed up and began to tear off Hlongwane's clothes. He stood quietly and let them do as they pleased. At last they dragged him into the ring, and he stood there naked in extreme shame and sorrow.

"Dance now, priest," yelled Mlotshwa. "Dance a Zulu heathen dance."

He began to sing an old dance song with a powerful bass voice, Zikude intaba, zikude, zikude intaba, zikude. . . .

The others joined in the song with rhythmic stamping and clapping.

Hlongwane stood still. If this must befall me, Lord, then let it happen, he thought.

"Don't you dance?" cried Mlotshwa. "Do you scorn your own people's dances?"

He was still sober enough to find the right words which would keep up the hate, an insinuation that the

pastor was not loyal to his own nation. He went up to Hlongwane, and stood with his face close to his. He reeked of beer, and his eyes were bloodshot and hazy.

Hlongwane did not move. He stood with his head lowered.

"Dance, I said," commanded Mlotshwa, and punched him in the cheek with his fist.

Calmness came over Hlongwane, and he raised his head. Thank goodness that you hit me right on the cheek, he thought. This is just as it should be. It was just like it said in the Scriptures.

"Hit me on the other cheek also, if you wish," he said calmly. "It says in the Bible: 'If any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.'"

Mlotshwa became almost paralyzed with rage.

"Yes, I will certainly do that," he said.

He gave him a fumbling blow on the other cheek. Then he got excited and struck and struck again, until Hlongwane's nose began to bleed. I'll teach you to dance, I'll teach you to do as I say!

Poor thing, strike me as much as you want, thought Hlongwane. You do not rule over yourself. This is just as it should be, as it should be.

The song and the stamping had quieted, and Mlotshwa went with unsteady steps and sat down again. Hlongwane stood alone and naked in the middle of the circle.

"I don't want to see the rascal here," said Mlotshwa. "Drive him out! He isn't going to fool away our time. We are going out to do something worth while tonight."

The men drank up the rest of the beer, and began to

get ready. Dube got up and shoved Hlongwane toward the door, unlocked it and stood waiting beside it. Hlongwane put on his shirt and trousers and went out with his coat and shoes in his hands. It felt cool and quiet to come out from the smelly hut. He remained standing on the street, and looked at Dube who stood outside the door to see that he got on his way properly.

"Good night, Dube, and thank you," he said and held out his hand.

Dube took it before he could stop to think. Then he pulled his hand away, and cringed back against the wall in fear.

"Good night, Dube," said Hlongwane again.

"Umfundisi," answered Dube haltingly, "I did not mean to . . ."

The others began to come out, and the pastor turned and went away. At the next corner he sat down and put on his shoes, and then continued homeward slowly with his coat on his arm. His face ached from the blows, and he felt tired but happy.

He had carried out his day's work. He walked on without any hurry, looked straight ahead, and stumbled now and then over the stones and ruts. After a while he stopped and began talking aloud to himself.

"This business of Christianity, it really works, it really works . . ."

The white wall around Edwaleni lay ahead of him and shone in the dark. The night wind whispered through the palms surrounding the chapel.





## CHAPTER

# 6

PHILEMON ZONDI had wiggled and fought his way up to a leading position among the boys at the school. He was quicker to think and more ambitious than Zulu boys usually are. They got used to waiting for his initiative in play and conversation. The others had taken with them to school the phlegmatic atmosphere of their native homes, where no problems were discussed, where there was neither room to move about nor light to read, and where there is only a question of keeping body and soul together. But Selina Zondi had sought to fashion her boys after the pattern of the Europeans. She was much more fussy with them than with the girls. She had kept the boys in school until the Boers had taken them for farm helpers, and she had seen to it that they did their lessons—which she herself could not read. She also washed them more often than usual, and made pathetic attempts to keep them dressed as the white farmer boys.

Selina had acquired this longing for all that was clean and neat and European when she as a sixteen-year-old girl had worked in the kitchen of a young

Danish family in Durban. The little Danish lady was cheerful and talkative and, like most newly-arrived Scandinavians, she was completely free from race prejudice. Selina had spoken terrible English with a Zulu accent, and the Danish lady had spoken even worse English with a queer Danish guttural sound; but they were able to understand one another beautifully, and talked and had fun the whole day long in the kitchen. The Danish lady was not used to the custom of speaking to the native servants only in commands and then to leave the kitchen. She wanted to be along in the work herself. She washed dishes and cooked the food and baked and sewed together with Selina and during their time together told her about her home in Denmark. Selina listened mostly, and the Dane spoke. Sometimes she tried to pump Selina about conditions in her home, but the black girl was ashamed to tell about dirt and poverty and ignorance. She spoke about her home in such a way that there would not be a very clear picture about life in a Zulu village, and she always tried to lead the conversation back to Denmark. And when she began to talk about her home again, Selina would devoutly absorb everything, would try to avoid rattling the pots and dishes so that she would not miss a word. In the morning she longed for the lady of the house to awaken, and thought in dreamy wonderment about the marvelous country far away to the north, where everything was beautiful and fine, and all people were good to each other. The time spent in the Danish family's kitchen shaped her ideal—a secure, clean, clear, white world, so unlike her own fumbling, hazy, muddy, dull en-

vironment, where no one had the strength nor dared to try anything new. That dream world was molded by the spirit of the white people and from this time spent with the Danish lady she never lost her admiration for the white people and faith in their almighty power. Of course, she soon saw other things in the white people's homes—bad, repulsive things—but her soul could not change and lose all that she had once acquired.

The Danish lady and she were both just as sad when Selina's father had come and had given her to Enoch Zondi, who had courted her and was willing to pay eleven cows for her. Selina never met any white person after that who was willing to be a real friend to her. And the Danish lady got other servants who had been held strictly on their side of the color line, and who looked upon the white people with cool and tired eyes. They expected abuse and scorn, and they answered in advance with insolence and pilfering. The Danish lady soon learned the usual jargon, "You can never depend on a nigger," and the episode with Selina paled away like an unreal dream, a misunderstanding. But Selina did not forget. Not many new impressions came into her poor hut, none that could erase the memory of the happy time in the Danish lady's shining kitchen. That period stood on a high and holy place in her soul, and the radiance around it only increased with the years. The white people could be wonderful—friendly, faithful, considerate. They knew everything, they could do everything and continually thought up new, exciting things. Selina believed in her humble and simple way that the white

people really longed to be friends with the Negroes, but were only dissatisfied with their dirt and laziness. In the Zondi home there were hardly ever any harsh words uttered against the white race of rulers. Enoch never had any opinions, of course, and Selina's ideas dominated. When the boss of the farm, van Buren, was unreasonable and mean, she sighed and complained and spoke bitter words about him. But the judgments were always about him personally. She never said, as did others: "Well, the whites are like that."

It was the memory of the period at the Danish home in Durban that drove Selina to try to go to the city again. But the paradise was lost and could not be found again. The flower of happiness does not grow easily in South African earth—least of all inside the boundaries of Stoneville.

But the Danish lady had given one thing to the family as an inheritance. The children grew up without hate against Europeans; they came out into the world with a calm and open expectation which few other Negro homes could have given them. It was this confidence that made the oldest boy, Jonathan, throw himself into the arms of Hendrik van Buren when he got into difficulty with the passport officials.

Selina did not have much left for her three girls. She looked down upon her own sex like a true Zulu woman. They would, of course, marry some time and toil—dumb and stupid—for a man. And Jonathan caused her worry—he had inherited his father's careless and sheepish nature. But Philemon was different. He kept himself neat and clean and was the star of the class. He must get inside the barriers to the white

people's shining paradise. That was her life's ambition.

For herself her ambition sank lower under the leaden weight of poverty and overcrowding. The Edwaleni mission station was the only reminder of a white and bright world. There were found friendliness and happiness, it was pretty and clean—comparatively—and there was solemnity and stillness at church services.

But it was a long time between visits there. Besides Sunday meetings it did not provide much for a woman to do. It was really a mission station for boys. From Monday on, happiness shrank and spirits sank. There was only empty waiting in Stoneville, restless, sleepless nights and dead days—and then the Zulu beer, gray, thick and quieting, numbing, deadening, and stupefying. Still she never became completely broken—yearning lived on beneath the weariness. . . .

But Philemon had gotten his chance; the way was open for him. He even had a white friend, Janne Örn, and he took every little chance to push further into the world of the white people. He was the only one of the schoolboys that dared go right up to the missionary's home and knock on the window of the children's room and whistle for Janne. That happened almost every day. Janne let him in, and showed him his nice Swedish toys, and sometimes the two boys disappeared, and went to their secret hiding place up in a umtombo tree. There they sat for hours and bragged to one another. Janne told about Sweden where he had been three years ago, described wild bravados about sailing in the skerries and skiing in the mountains. He himself was always the hero of the story. He



had fought terrible storms away out at sea, and ridden with terrific speed down Mt. Åre and lost his way in the mountain fogs. The modicum of reality behind it all consisted in the fact that the Örn family had one summer hired a small sailboat, and that Janne had read a child's book about adventures in the mountains.

Philemon told about cobras and witch doctors and leopards which he had seen in Zululand, about family feuds and battles of life and death with pythons. He had really seen a leopard once, but it was dead and was only a skin, since it was used as a loin cloth by a Zulu chief.

In school, too, Philemon had also kept himself at the front. He had risen to the level of substitute Sunday school teacher. On his part it was not a matter of any deeper piety, but the task was nice and honorable, and it carried with it the privilege of riding the train on Sunday mornings to a distant outlying chapel. Of course, there he had to teach a group of small children, which was a bother to him, but the trips were exciting, and the gain in prestige was enormous.

One Sunday he had been to see the missionary as usual, and had received money for the ticket, and gone to the train. It was a long walk through the location to the railroad station, but the streets were quiet and not dangerous on a Sunday morning. Those who had spent Saturday in the usual way with homemade brew were sleeping it off, and it was the sober and quiet ones who could be seen on the streets on their way to church. Of course, there were those who combined the two ways of living, and went shamefacedly to church in remorse and suffering from the aftereffects.



The bell at Edwaleni church was in the midst of its nine-o'clock ringing, and between the strokes you could hear the roof timbers creaking and groaning.

There was a whole flock of schoolboys from Edwaleni who were provided with travel money and sent to different outlying Swedish missions to help in Sunday schools. Most of them were steady, serious, older boys who simultaneously were proctors and monitors. Philemon was an exception. He was not a steady type, but he had been included, thanks to Pastor Hlongwane, who persisted in believing all possible good about the fifteen-year-old lad. He could not see Philemon without thinking of Selina, and crediting him in advance with good qualities inherited from his mother—very much in advance.

Philemon nodded good-by to his friends, who scattered out on other platforms, and boarded the train which went northeast through a series of suburbs outside of Johannesburg. At first the railroad car was quite empty. A sleepy white conductor, who looked as though he had slept in his clothes, came in and took his ticket without looking closely at him. The conductor was unshaven, had dirty hands, and apparently belonged to the kind of white people who are placed in the state's railroad system because no one else will have them. Most of the jobs on the railroad are reserved for the white people, and at times serve as a kind of welfare job for backward Europeans.

At the next two stations a great mass of people boarded the train, and Philemon's coach became crowded with noisy natives in Sunday dress, who had the stench of windowless houses. The conductor came

back and took the tickets. This time he looked more wide awake and self-assured. It is important not to appear afraid when one is the only white man in a crowd of blacks. He stretched his hand out to Philemon without saying a word.

"I have already given you my ticket," said Philemon in Afrikaans, the Boer language, which he was barely able to manage. If possible, one always speaks Afrikaans to railroad people.

The white man examined him nervously and suspiciously. Obviously he did not recognize the boy.

"Give me the ticket quickly," he bellowed. "Don't try to bluff me."

"That is the truth," repeated Philemon. "You took it from me right after leaving the Stoneville station."

He looked around to find another Negro who had sat in the coach from the start, but did not find him in the crowded condition.

"Where are you traveling?" asked the conductor impatiently.

"To Vlakfontein."

"Then you will have to have a new ticket. That will be two shillings and fourpence."

Philemon really had four shillings, but he had thought to use them for something else.

"Why do I have to pay again?" he asked. "You have already taken my ticket. That is absolutely true."

He began to think that perhaps he should be polite and stand up when he spoke to a white man. He got up quickly. Because of the crowd, he happened to stand close up to the conductor. The white man was

short, not much taller than Philemon, and he mistook the gesture, and thought that the Negro boy wanted to start trouble. He took a step backward, lost his balance and sat down in the lap of a Negro behind him.

There was spiteful laughing all around, and the natives began to crowd about to see the spectacle. Philemon, too, could not keep from laughing.

The conductor got up, trembling with rage, and hit Philemon in his chest, so that the boy fell back on his seat.

He looked around, furious and a bit frightened, until the laughing had quieted. Now it was not the matter of a ticket or two shillings and four-pence. It was a matter as important as a white man's prestige. Blacks had had the audacity of being insubordinate and poking fun at a representative of the noble European race. The foundations of society were shaking.

"Are you trying to fight? You will have to pay for this," he shouted at Philemon, and left the coach half running to secure help. He could not handle the whole crowd of Negroes alone.

A native who sat beside Philemon looked sympathetically at him.

"Disappear as fast as you can," he said. "Go and hide somewhere and jump off the train at the next station. This won't be good for you."

But Philemon was obstinate. He sat with his arms folded, and looked straight ahead of him.

"Why should I run away? I have not done anything bad. You can testify that I haven't done anything."

The other man smiled scornfully.

"It isn't a question of what you have done or not

done. A white man is angry with you, and then it is always bad."

"Yes, but it is his fault. He took the ticket away from me."

The other man began to tire of the contradictions.

"Just disappear," he repeated, and took Philemon by the arm and tried to get him to get up. "We won't testify. We don't want to get into a mess for your sake."

Philemon got up against his will, and began to work his way toward the door.

"Stop there," cried some one behind him in Afrikaans.

He turned around and saw the conductor come in from the other end of the coach in company with another conductor who was larger and heavier, but of the same dirty and unkempt appearance.

"There he is," said the first conductor, "he was the one who hit me."

Philemon stopped and took off his cap. Now he was afraid.

"I had a ticket," he said hurriedly. "I gave it to this gentleman."

"Hy lieg, he lies," interrupted the little conductor heatedly. "And he hit me and was insolent."

The stocky conductor went up and grabbed Philemon's coat collar, gathered the cloth for a good grip, and held him at arm's length. He was a calm and hard type, not nervously angry as the other one.

"You filthy dog, so you don't know how to act in front of a white man?"

He hit Philemon in the face, and continued to speak calmly and scornfully while he boxed his ears.

"So you think you can get by without a ticket, eh . . . ."

"And be insolent to a white man . . . . You don't know that a nigger is supposed to obey, eh . . . . You don't have respect for a white man, eh . . . ."

The last blow was harder, and Philemon's lip began to swell. The little conductor had gathered courage and wanted to make his contribution to the punishment. He took hold of Philemon's left arm, and twisted it as hard as he could. The boy wept, and tried to break away.

It was absolutely quiet in the coach. The conductors and the native boy were the center of everyone's attention. The native passengers sat and looked at the two white men, looked and hated with a bitterness which paralyzed the mind, and was too great to express in action. It could only be laid like a new dark layer on top of the other layers of hate which had gathered during generations, and were stored up for the great day, the day of reckoning. To rush up and begin to fight the white men had seemed like all too feeble a revenge. That would be jumping the gun. The white people let their anger rise and fought and scolded when they were angry with a black. But then they forgot. They did not go around with bitterness in their minds. They did not wait for a new order of things. They only wanted to save what they had. But the blacks could not fight. They took all this with their caps in their hands, they worked and kept quiet. But they gathered hate. Occasionally they took cruel re-



venge on some defenseless white man—but their big day lay far in the future. It would come at last. They waited for it. A hundred betrayed hopes, a thousand small insults, ten thousand days of weariness and hunger, gathered like brooks into a large river which grew more powerful as it lengthened. Africa's river flows slowly, lazily, and quietly. But it knows exactly where it is going.

Everything was the white man's fault. He was blamed for everything, whether he was guilty or not. All the good he had done for the blacks, all the epidemics he had checked, all the peacemaking in their own tribal feuds, all legal security and civilization he had built up in Africa, were forgotten or denied, while all the bad, blacks themselves had done against one another was forgiven. The white man did have a large measure of guilt, but far greater was the guilt that was heaped upon his shoulders and even larger was the retribution which would some day be demanded of him. The thoughts of Africa had gradually gathered into one single direction as if by a diabolical magnet. It is dangerous to irritate the black man. He keeps quiet and suffers, but he does not forgive. The white man does not keep quiet. He strikes, but he forgets. It is easy to forget when one wins.

Sometimes the hate of a crowd can turn into concentrated atrocity. The large conductor looked around, saw all the eyes turned on him, read their message, and shivered inwardly.

"Come, we will take him away," he said to the other, and they both went off with Philemon, holding him by his arms. They waited out on the platform, and the



next time the train stopped they got off, and left him with a white policeman who patrolled the station. He quickly wrote down the complaints: trying to travel without a ticket, forcefully resisting a conductor. Then they left their names and addresses and jumped on the train again.

The policeman put handcuffs on Philemon and left him with a black constable with orders to take him to a local jail. The boy cried and explained, but the white policeman only gave him an uninterested look and continued to stroll on the platform.

For three days Philemon sat in jail before his case came up in the juvenile court, and for three days Örn, Hlongwane, and Selina hunted for him. It happened, of course, that boys disappeared from school, but it was usually that they had gone out on some escapade of their own. But Philemon should have had enough of escapades, and there was cause to think that something had gone wrong. Selina went to acquaintances from house to house in despair, and asked if anyone had seen or heard anything of her boy. No one knew anything or was particularly interested. Of course, it happened every day in the location that people disappeared. Why should one worry and run around and search? If a person was knifed by tsotsis or run over, he would by and by come back from the hospital, or else be buried; if he was arrested, he would eventually get out, or else he would not get out at all. The senses were blunted by all the accidents: in every other family someone was missing. You mourned for a time, but got used to it. But Selina could not take it so easily. She walked and walked on tired feet in the alleys, and

between rounds she would wander up to the Edwaleni mission station to ask if the pastors had not heard yet.

Janne Örn did not want to leave his good friend in the lurch either. He went out on a rash rescue expedition in the slum quarters, but was quickly brought back by his frightened parents.

Hlongwane went from hospital to hospital and examined the patients, and expected at any time to find Philemon in a bed. It did not pay to ask the office boys at the hospital for Philemon's name, that he knew from experience. There you only met African laziness and unreliability. But he had his pastoral privilege to go through the wards at any time of the day or night.

The search went slowly. He was recognized everywhere by members of his congregation who called to him and wanted to lighten their troubles. All of them wanted to tell about their sickness with a thousand details and to hear news from the outside world. Everywhere he had to disentangle himself carefully and promise to come again so that he could continue walking among the beds and hunt for the boy.

Frederick Örn took upon himself the hardest job—to go around to the jails. A black minister would never have had a chance to get in, but Örn was respected in any case as a white man, even if he belonged to a profession about which the police had very low opinions—these missionaries, who get into everything and take sides with filthy Negroes. He was compelled to wait endlessly at the jails; they tried to tire him out by a chilly lack of interest; and they intimated that it was unlawful to permit him to come into the prisons. But Örn was stubborn as a mule. He must get in. When he

admired people he was willing to be pushed and sent here and there and was soft as wax; but when he was angry and suspicious, he was not to be moved an inch. He threatened to go to higher authorities, he intimated that he would appeal to the press, and the same thing happened everywhere: he was admitted, and a reluctant constable went with him on a tour of the cells. The more he saw, the more depressed he became. These cement cellars reminded him often of old medieval forts, dismal, dark and crowded. Negroes raised themselves from the floor, and took hold of his clothes and begged him for help.

"Umfundisi, ask them to let me out. I had only forgotten my workpapers at home, and now I have been here five days, and no one does anything about it. . . ."

"Umfundisi, wait a minute, and listen to me. They say that I went down a staircase at the station that was only for the white people, and they beat me and put me here. But I didn't think it was so terrible to go down those steps. Umfundisi. . . ."

"Umfundisi, I have money at home to pay my fines, but no one will let me go and get my money, and I can't telephone or write to anyone. Could you go home and get my money, and come and get me out. . . ."

Örn wrote down an address here and there in passing, but he had to continue his walk in and out through additional barred doors. It was more important about Philemon than the others. He was too young to have to do with the jail. If he was in jail he must be found.

For three days Örn continued to hunt and wait at jails, and every evening he came home dead tired from the day's excitement and confusion. Then he had to

calm Selina who came each evening to Hlongwane's house to get word.

The native teachers at the school found it hard to understand how the two pastors could neglect their work for days to hunt for that boy. There were so many others. One boy more or less surely did not mean much at a large school.

On the fourth day there came at last a sign of life from Philemon. A missionary from another church had by chance found him in a little police jail in a suburb, and had telephoned Örn. Philemon was now on his way to the courthouse in a prison van he said. His case was coming before the judge for juveniles at ten o'clock that day.

Örn looked at his watch. It was half past nine. He got into his old Ford and jogged along through the location alleys with alarming speed. A few miles from Edwaleni the car began to cough and sputter. After a few final tugs the car stopped, and remained standing right in the middle of the native location. Örn had forgotten to fill up with gasoline. It was a long way to go to the nearest gas station, and it took a good while before he found it and was on his way back with a borrowed gasoline drum in his hand. The clock had now gotten to be twenty minutes after ten, and he did not get to the courthouse until a quarter to eleven. Then it was already too late.

Philemon's case had come up first of all, since the two conductors were in a hurry, and asked that they might not need to wait before they were called in as witnesses.

He was paralyzed with fear when he was led in and

placed in the defendant's stall. The other prisoners in the jail had entertained themselves by scaring him for days about the terrible fate which awaited him. Most likely he would be whipped and knocked about until he could neither stand nor walk. With eyes wide with fright he looked around at the judge, the clerk, the police, the lawyer and the two conductors who sat in the witness bench.

The complaint against him was read: "Philemon Bekumuzi Zondi, of native race, fifteen years, male schoolboy, residing at the Swedish Mission in Stoneville, tried deceitfully on the fourteenth of October, at nine-forty o'clock, to transport himself by train between Stoneville and Vlakfontein without possessing a ticket. Upon request to present the ticket he refused to show it, and harshly mistreated the conductor on duty. Following an exchange of words, he gave the conductor a blow on the chest so that he fell backwards, and later sought to excite the other passengers to attack the conductor. When still another conductor was called, the defendant continued to attack the conductors, and made violent resistance when these tried to arrest him. The defendant has not previously been punished."

The magistrate looked at Philemon over his eyeglasses. He was a tall, thin and bald man with a wrinkled codfish face. He looked dried up but not unfriendly.

"Well," he asked, "so you are Philemon Bekumuzi Zondi, fifteen years old?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Address the magistrate with 'Your Worship,' and



stand up when you address him," said a low voice beside Philemon. It came from a black policeman who stood stiff as a stick beside the defendant's stall. He had his eyes directed straight ahead of him, not looking at the boy.

"Yes, Your Worship," corrected Philemon and stood up.

"Are you guilty or not guilty of the complaint which has been read against you?"

"No, Your Worship, it was not at all as they said. I said nothing bad to the conductor, and I did not hit him. I had bought a ticket, and the conductor took it away from me. Umfundisi Örn knows that I got money for the ticket."

"Who is umfundisi Örn?"

"He is the missionary at the school where I live."

"Was he present and also saw that you bought a ticket?"

"No, Your Worship."

"Well, don't mix him up in this then. The defendant states that he is not guilty. Call the first witness."

The prosecutor fussed with some papers and yawned in a bored manner. Then he got up and read:

"Your Worship, the first witness, Dick Brown, conductor in the state's railroad, thirty-six years, European."

The two conductors had been sitting with resolutely puckered faces. They were washed and shaved, and relatively neatly dressed in honor of the day. The smaller of the two, Brown, had with some difficulty been able to convince the older one that it was necessary to convict the Negro boy at whatever price.



Here was a typical example of an insubordinate Negro who tried to be the equal of the white people. Even if he had not precisely dared to hit the conductors, he had surely wanted to, and he must have some punishment and learn manners. Negroes receive altogether too few floggings nowadays. The upper class spoils its servants. Brown was not a native South African, but had grown up in London's slum quarters, and he had wholeheartedly accepted the idea of a ruling class. He was enthusiastic about his new homeland, where for the first time in his life he found people whom he could order around. The other conductor was a South African of the poorest kind, and he also did not have much more than his white skin to glory in. So much the more must every possible bit of disrespect for the color of the skin be punished. Both conductors were now full of determination.

Brown went quickly up to the witness box, put his hand on the Bible, and fearlessly gave his oath.

The prosecutor stood up, and began to examine him with a preoccupied expression. He wanted to get through with the whole thing as quickly as possible. There was a long list of cases, and this one was quite simple.

"The defendant was asked by you to show his ticket?"

"Yes. It was right after the Jagersrus station."

"What did he answer then?"

"He claimed that he had already given me his ticket. But that was a lie. I had never seen him before. He is apparently one of those smart guys who try to get by without a ticket when there are many people on

the train. But I usually have a sharp eye, so it didn't work."

Philemon took courage and got up and bowed.

"Your Worship, that is not true. I had bought the ticket in Stoneville, and he took it away from me."

Both conductors looked furiously at him.

"Jy lieg, infidel, you lie," said Brown in a heated tone. He spoke Afrikaans with a foreign accent.

The magistrate examined the defendant and the witnesses carefully over his glasses. He did not like the witnesses. They seemed unmannerly and uneducated. That little Negro boy did not seem to be a likely one to start trouble with grown men, but he was not dumb either. One could imagine that he might try to travel without a ticket.

"I have to request the witnesses to refrain from any comments. Please answer only the questions. The defendant cannot speak before he is requested to do so."

The lawyer continued the examination.

"Well, what happened then?"

"Well, I requested the defendant again to show a ticket or pay for another one. Then he got up, hit my chest so that I fell backwards, and called me a Fascist and lackey of the capitalists. He probably depended upon the other natives in the coach to take his part."

That ought to tell, thought the conductor. He had heard the phrases from excited Negroes now and then, and counted on its making an impression on the judge. The hint about Communism always put a scare in people.

Philemon stared in consternation. He had never

heard those words, and he had no idea what they meant. Was there no friendly soul who believed in him? He looked from one face to the other. The black policeman stood like a stone statue. The prosecutor and clerk looked indifferent, the conductors hated him. But the magistrate did not look mean, and he at least had interesting eyes. Perhaps he would understand him.

Philemon looked appealingly at him, and slowly shook his head to show his innocence. But the magistrate quickly looked down at his papers. He did not want to be part of any secret understanding.

"Well, what happened then?"

"Oh," answered Brown, "the other kaffirs in the coach began to show a hostile attitude, because the defendant stirred them up, so I called Mr. Jan Botsma, too. When we came back to take the defendant away from the coach, he told the others to attack us, and gave us several hits and kicks until we overpowered him."

"Has the witness any more to add?"

"No, that is all. I hope the defendant gets his punishment, because it happens so often that people try to get away without a ticket."

The magistrate looked irritatedly at the witness. It was obvious that he did not like him.

"No comments from the witnesses, I have said! And now I will ask a few questions. It says in the complaint that the defendant tried to travel without ticket between Stoneville and Vlakfontein. But the witness says that he asked for the ticket for the first time after Jagersrus station. Isn't it usual that the conductors go

through all the coaches after every station? Why wasn't the defendant approached right after the Stoneville station to show his ticket?"

Brown seemed uncertain. He had not thought through this.

"Your Worship, he probably did not get on before Jagersrus in that case."

"Well, but if the defendant now lives in Stoneville, and eventually can show that he boarded the train there, can the witness then have missed seeing him on his rounds?"

"Yes, Your Worship, he can have hidden himself somewhere on the train."

The magistrate looked out through the window, and drummed impatiently with his fingers on the arm of his chair. Then he turned to Philemon, examined first him and then the conductor with a gleam of humor in his old fish face.

"It seems to me that the defendant is quite small to attack a grown man. Does the witness insist that he used force of more serious sort?"

Brown smiled ingratiatingly and humbly.

"Your Worship, I myself am not very large. A cheeky nigger could perhaps be tempted to attack me. And he perhaps hoped that the other natives would help. One never knows about these Communists nowadays."

The magistrate looked at Brown a minute with real disgust and aversion. Then he quickly looked down to hide his face.

"The witness may leave. Next witness!"

Jan Botsma came up, took the oath, and gave his

portion of evidence in almost the exact words of Brown. The magistrate listened with an impatient mien. The evidence seemed all too well prepared.

"The witness may leave. Has the prosecutor any other witnesses from the fellow passengers or train personnel?"

"No, Your Worship, we have not been able to find any other witness."

"Well, may we now hear what the defendant has to say."

Philemon got up, shaking and ready to cry, and repeated his story. He had had a ticket, he had not said a mean word to the conductor, he had not touched him, but they had kicked and hit him, and the police in the jail had also kicked him.

The old judge listened without changing expression. That sounded quite true, he thought. The boy was perhaps not guilty. But an acquittal against two evidences was not possible. There would only be an appeal, and the boy would be held in jail. It would be simplest for him to get a little thrashing, and then be let out.

He made a few notations in silence while the lawyer and clerk whispered about the next case, and Philemon shook with tension. The conductors mumbled to one another, repeated their old arguments, and strengthened one another in their belief. Then the magistrate coughed, and all were quiet.

"Will the defendant get up. Hm, the complaint of traveling without a ticket I must leave unheeded. That can be a misunderstanding. There we have the testimony of only one witness against the defendant's de-



nial. The same is true about the charge of abuse and force against conductor Brown individually. The later complaint of abuse and force against the conductors Brown and Botsma must, however, be taken into account. There we have the words of two witnesses against the defendant's denial. But considering the physical strength of the defendant and his age, the force cannot have been of a more serious nature. The defendant has not been punished before either. Therefore I feel that thrashing is enough of a punishment. The defendant is sentenced to eight lashes with a cane. The case is closed. Next case."

As dismissal the magistrate gave both the witnesses a haughty and contemptuous look, which his codfish face easily made possible. He often had to endure such witnesses. He knew the type, and was irritated by it.

Örn arrived just as Philemon was led out from the court to be driven to the police station. He jumped out of the car and rushed up the stairs.

"One minute," he said to the constable who held Philemon. "May I speak to the boy. He belongs to my school."

The policeman stopped, but kept his grip on Philemon's arm.

Philemon lighted up when he at last saw a friendly face, and with his black cheeks still wet from tears he began quickly to tell his story again. The words gushed forth in Zulu, and Örn found it hard to follow along. But he understood enough to become so upset that he trembled.



"Wait here a minute," he said to the policeman. "I want to talk to the judge."

"We can't wait here. We have our orders. We are taking the boy to Stoneville police station, and we have orders to thrash him. You can fetch him afterwards if you wish."

"But man, this boy is innocent. Can't you wait here a minute while I clear up the situation?"

The policeman remained standing a minute while Örn rushed into the courthouse. Then he shrugged his shoulders, pulled Philemon along, threw him into the police van, locked the door, and drove in the direction of Stoneville.

Örn was able to get in between two cases and talk to the judge. He could not keep calm and he irritated the magistrate with this obtrusive manner.

"I am sure that the boy is innocent," he said. "I gave him money myself for the ticket, and he is not at all the kind that bothers grown people. By the way, have you questioned the ticket seller in Stoneville? He perhaps remembers that the boy bought a ticket."

"You can't know anything for certain as to his guilt," answered the magistrate impatiently. "Your impression of the boy may be wrong. There were two witnesses to the assault. Your question about the ticket seller is irrelevant, since I did not find the boy guilty for traveling without a ticket. The sentence was for abuse and forceful resistance; and if you do not find any new witnesses for the defendant's side, it won't be possible to take up the case again."

"Yes, but you can at least postpone the punishment?"

"Only if there are reasonable grounds to assume that you can find witnesses who can give other information about the action. Otherwise the judgment will be carried out immediately. I am sorry."

Örn considered carefully.

"It will not be easy to find people who were on the train. But what if the conductors take back their words?"

"You can try, but it is not likely that they will do so. They gave their evidence under oath."

Örn sat down heavily.

"It looks quite hopeless. A boy travels to teach in a Sunday school. He behaves properly and presents his ticket. He is abused, kicked, and ill treated, he has to sit in jail for three days, he is sentenced to thrashings, and he is stigmatized in the penal file. All this despite the fact that he is completely innocent."

Örn gave a start when he observed what he had said. This is perhaps called impeaching a judicial sentence pronounced. But the judge did not seem upset.

"That about ill-treating the boy is another story," he answered. "You have the right to make a case of that for the court, provided you get his parents' authorization, and provided you find witnesses. I don't think that will be so easy. As for the question of his guilt—well, we don't know anything about that."

You made a slip of the tongue there all right, thought Örn.

"So, you don't know if the boy is innocent. But how can you sentence him then?"

"Sir, you apparently do not know anything about law. From a legal point of view his guilt is proven.

One assumes that the witnesses speak the truth under oath, until one gets proof to the contrary. What you or I think or feel cannot be taken into account."

He agrees with me really, thought Örn. But this little Pilate doesn't dare to stand up for his opinions, and Philemon was sentenced just the same.

A new thought hit him.

"Well, but you found him not guilty to the charge that he traveled without a ticket. Then is it not doubtful that the charge of unprovoked abuse is unjustified also? The one depends on the other, doesn't it?"

The judge was clear, calm, and unshakeable.

"No, I proceed from the fact that the conductor can have made a mistake in the question of the ticket. But whether the boy was rightfully or not charged with ticket cheating, he has no right to abuse the conductors."

"Yes, but if he felt innocently blamed for the ticket cheating, would not that be an extenuating circumstance to that alleged abuse?"

"Yes, that is right, Sir. Absolutely right. Therefore I sentenced him to only eight cuts."

"But you know how the police hit? They beat them half to death. The boy can become bitter and full of hatred after this."

"That question does not lie within my domain. I sentence to a certain punishment according to the law. How the punishment then is carried out falls under other authorities."

Old skullbones, thought Örn. Pilate. You wash your hands, and go home and eat a good lunch while Phile-

mon is thrashed. Respectable and cultured you are, but a coward. A Zulu chief could teach you a lot.

He stood up.

"So that is your last word? The sentence cannot be changed?"

"I am sorry. Not under present circumstances. There are adequate legal reasons to let it stand."

"And ten times better humane reasons to change it!"

Örn put up his stubborn Il-Duce chin.

The judge arose, tall and hunchbacked, made a little bow, and reached out his hands.

"Well, you have heard my reasoning. If you haven't anything new of importance to set forth, we have, in fact, nothing more to say to one another for the time being. I have to continue with the next case."

Örn searched for signs of anger in the judge's face. He was afraid that he had gone too far. But the old lawyer's eyes were almost friendly. He even put out his hand.

"Good-by then, Pastor, and good luck in your work—your real work."

That was, nevertheless, a little final kick, even if it was given nicely and quietly, as you would expect from an old man of the world.

He is, no doubt, good to his servants and his wife and his dog, thought Örn. At home where he has full legal right to be human. Lucky that one does not have his job. I would not be any good for that.

Örn shook the old man's fragile hand.

"Well, good-by, then. And thank you for your information. I am sorry to have taken up your time."

"Oh, that is all right."

The missionary took his hat and went toward the door. Then he stopped and turned around.

"Oh, there was one thing more. Those conductors, where can I get in touch with them?"

"You can get their names and addresses at the court office. They are perhaps there yet anyway, and giving receipts for their fees as witnesses."

"Thank you."

Örn stood a few seconds and looked at the judge, tried to get contact with him on a human level. But the judge's face was absolutely without expression. He held a paper in his hand, but waited politely to read it until Örn had gotten out through the door.

Funny guy, thought Örn, as he walked along the corridor. Wonder if he ever has been a real human being. And a boy. Like Philemon.

It cut him whenever he happened to think of Philemon, and he hurried to find the conductors. He located them on the way out from the court office, and recognized them from their uniforms.

"Sirs, may I speak with you a minute. My name is Örn, missionary. You have given evidence in the case against the native boy, Philemon Zondi?"

Brown and Botsma seemed terribly troubled. They stopped a minute, but then continued impolitely to walk toward the door with Örn at their heels. Their steps echoed against the stone floor of the corridor.

"What is it about, then?" asked Botsma, with his back toward Örn.

The missionary tried to crowd in between them. He became even more certain that he was right. The



men's behavior smelled of guilty consciences from far off.

"I know the boy," he continued sharply, "and I have reason to believe that he was sentenced innocently. Are you men really sure that you have not made a mistake? Wouldn't you be able to change your evidence, if the case was taken up again?"

The conductors increased their steps. They were out on the street now.

"Do you mean that we have made up this story?" answered Brown shrilly with the indignation of injured innocence. Be careful if you come with such assertions. We are only doing our duty in the service of the state. You can go and talk with the judge, if you wish. Good-by."

Örn was not to be put off. He kept even steps with them and looked furious, first at the little spindly Brown, and then at the full-grown Botsma. The missionary in the middle with his black coat was the shortest of the three men, and also the angriest and most determined.

"Do you still maintain that that little Negro boy tried to assault and maltreat you two? And is it right that he is thrashed?"

Botsma looked straight ahead, and hurried even faster without saying a word. Brown had to do the answering. But he did not look at Örn either, and spoke in a vehement tone.

"You are a missionary, I hear. So you are one of those half-Communists who run and fuss about the Negroes. Then naturally you believe all that they say.

But don't try to come with accusations against us. That can be a question of libel."

Örn understood that there was nothing to be gained. But he wanted to give them a few words along the way anyway.

"You believe in God, I presume. Don't forget that if you have given false evidence and sentenced an innocent boy, then you will never be forgiven for that sin until you confess and make amends for what you have done. Never, I say. It will hang over you throughout your entire life. I hope that you will not be able to sleep a single night until you have confessed."

Botsma stopped, furious, and looked as though he wanted to hit Örn. He almost screamed:

"Can't we walk in peace on the street? Do you think we take just anything from any old 'nigger' priest?"

Örn stood quietly, and looked him right in the eye. At last Botsma's look flinched, and he turned and went, followed by Brown. They talked to one another in upset tones, but not once did they turn and look back.

Örn hurried to his automobile and drove as fast as he could toward Stoneville to be ready to take Philemon home after the punishment. While driving he cooled after all the excitement. The streets looked more dismal than usual, and the swarm of people more meaningless.

"What will happen to this country?" he mumbled. "Satan is walking at large here, and does what he wishes with the souls. What will happen to Philemon?"

I suppose he will become ruined and filled with hatred as the others. . . .”

Philemon was led into the police station and had to sit in a waiting room with several other boys and men who were to be whipped. The same fate awaited them all: bloody backs and sleepless nights. Some still had scars from previous whippings. They cried out, complained to one another, protested their innocence, and frightened one another almost as in a waiting room at a hospital. Most of them had only been sentenced to “cuts with a cane,” but some others had been given “lashes,” severe whipping, which left permanent scars. A burglar and a Negro, who had thrown stones at the police, belonged to the latter. A ragged kitchen boy, who had brutally attacked his mistress, sat and shivered at the prospect of a treatment with “The cat of nine tails.” A well-dressed city Negro of the type that usually discusses politics and reads foreign newspapers, stood in a corner and waited for ten “cuts.” He had deliberately sat down on a park bench which was only for white people and refused to move in spite of a native constable’s orders. He was now going to be deprived of the desire to demonstrate his opinions. There were also a few men who had worked under false passes. A couple of half-grown boys were to be thrashed because they had taken frankfurters from a meat shop and were for the future to be furnished with a psychological counterbalance to the impulses of hunger. And then there was Philemon, who had given forceful resistance to authorities. The boys were to

be released after the whippings, but the grown men were to be held for jail sentences of different lengths. The kitchen boy was to get eight years.

The room became absolutely quiet when the door was opened and a white young man was brought in handcuffed. He was quickly led into another room, but the questions immediately began to fly. What could *he* have done? Just think that they put handcuffs on a white man, too. Would he be flogged, too?

Yes, he was going to be whipped, too, and get some years in prison, a black constable announced condescendingly. He had committed the sin above all sins, he had stepped over racial boundaries and raped a native girl.

The questions rained over the constable, who liked being the center of interest.

"Do they hit him just as hard as they do us? Will he also get sores on his back? Do they bind him down when they hit him? Do they have the same whip as for us?"

"Yes, indeed," said the constable. "They will whip him just as hard, when he has done such a thing. He won't forget this day, he, he. He will no doubt get all he can take."

General wonderment. To think that the white people could be part of this, too. They had not really been clear about this, and it afforded them something like comfort.

The atmosphere became a little easier, and someone even laughed. But then the well-dressed Negro, he who had sat on the forbidden park bench, began to

turn the wheel the other way, and to encourage the old bitter mood.

"Oh, yes, the white people can be punished all right," he said. "But don't forget that they can freely do things that we blacks are punished for. They can travel where they want to, they don't need to carry passes, they can go out at night in the city, they can have guns. We are punished for such things, don't forget that."

"Shut your mouth," commanded one of the black constables, who felt that the atmosphere began to be uncomfortable.

But he could not prevent the bitterness from coming back to their faces. And with it came the fear and unrest about the punishment that awaited them. The room looked harsher and more dismal than before, and the constables straightened up and took a stronger grip on their spears.

Then the prisoners were called up one at a time to have their names and their sentences verified and registered, and to be examined by a doctor to see how much in the way of whippings they could stand, as the law prescribes. A native policeman led Philemon up to a desk in a neighboring room. It happened to be Hendrik van Buren who sat there. The tall, blond Boer looked up and was amazed when he recognized Philemon. He nodded reservedly, but not in an unfriendly way.

"Philemon Zondi, are you here? What kind of foolishness have you been up to?"

He was the only one of the white constables who spoke the Negro language.



There was a gleam of hope in Philemon's eyes.

"Nothing, nkosana Hendrik. There were some conductors who lied about me, and said that I had hit them and traveled without a ticket."

He began to tell his whole story again. The black constable who held his arm wanted to quiet him, but van Buren made a parrying gesture. He wanted to hear the story, even though it was not his duty to write anything but the prisoner's name and punishment. His clear-cut, handsome face darkened while he listened. He knew Philemon and his family, and he believed the boy's tale. This won't do, he thought. This can't happen. The Negroes must be kept in their place, but we can't be unfair. Father was always fair with them at least, although he had his ideas. Wonder how Selina and Enoch will take this. They have already lost Jonathan. . . . He blushed, and felt out of sorts. Yes, Jonathan. But I only went according to the law. I could not do anything else.

The black constable looked at him amazed. Why did he let the boy stand there and talk?

But Hendrik van Buren did not listen any longer. His thoughts went back to the farm in Zululand. He came running down the grass lawn toward the river, and Jonathan came toward him and yelled and waved with his arms. It was warm and light and sunny, and the breeze blew through the high grass. Away down there in the valley the river shone, and the boys ran down that way, side by side. Jonathan was his best friend, calm and steadfast, and the two were together from morning to night. Down by the river the boys took off their clothes, and jumped into the water which

glistened brightly in the sunshine. "Come, Hendrik, we will race to the other side." "Jonathan, you fell behind, after all, you swim like an old cow." One white and one black boy climbed up the shore on the other side. They rushed laughingly into the brush on the banks and broke twigs, and began to fence. The river flowed and glistened, and the wind soughed, and Africa's sun shone over everything. Jonathan . . . .

Philemon had become quiet. Hendrik raised his eyes again, and looked at him. His sharp blue eyes looked unhappy, and he grasped the ruler with his hands. Slowly he gathered himself together again and succeeded in fitting his spirit into the bars and squares of the office. But he had difficulty in becoming as hard as the regulation required.

"Philemon, you consider yourself unfairly judged. I am sorry. . . . I mean, I can't do anything about that."

The black constable had resigned himself, and slipped into apathetic waiting. It was not his duty to wonder about what the white men undertook. You could never understand them. His responsibility was to follow orders.

Hendrik van Buren scrutinized Philemon again with a look which alternated between sorrow and puzzled wonder. The racial wall, which ordinarily stood steady and hard, shrank and shrank, and became like a thin shell, where friendliness and yearning forced their way through.

For a minute it broke entirely.

"Philemon, have you heard anything from Jonathan?"

"No, nkosana Hendrik. They sent him far away."

"If you get to see him, greet him from me. Do you hear, greet him from me."

"Yes, nkosana."

Suddenly Hendrik noticed that he was dressed in uniform, and he gathered strength from the buttons in the uniform and from the heavy pistol which hung from his belt. He collected himself, and said in a commanding tone to the native constable:

"All right, take him out to the doctor. There is nothing I can do."

He waited a minute before calling in the next prisoner, sat quietly and stared, with thoughts tumbling around and not finding a way out.

But since they found no place to go, one after the other, they gradually fell back into their usual grooves.

"This shouldn't be allowed to happen," he mumbled at last. "But from a broad point of view what we do is nevertheless right. We must maintain the white civilization."

Then he called in the next prisoner.

The doctor who examined Philemon was a fat and good-natured old fellow with gold-rimmed glasses. He was Jewish, as were so many of his colleagues in Johannesburg, and a spiritual stranger in the country. His home was in Bavaria, and he had gotten enough of white "Herrenvolk" ideas. He was sick and tired of this Germanic hybrid which in strange ways had been brought way down to southernmost Africa, and there bloomed in new earth.

He came up to Philemon, gaily swinging his stethoscope.

"Will the constable move, so that I can look at this young man. Now, what have we been up to now? There surely has not been time for any manslaughter at this age? Take off your shirt so I can listen to your heart. Hope we have something wrong, so we can get out of whippings."

He muttered to himself in German while he put the stethoscope here and there on Philemon's chest.

"Mad people. Hit small children. And they think it will help. It won't help a bit, I say. Well, the boy is as healthy and spry as the kernel of a hazelnut. Then I must write that they will have to lessen the blows to six because of general weakness. Hm, weak lungs, that sounds better. You can fool them at least a little anyway. As if people could be molded by whips. When are people going to learn to leave one another in peace. These dumb Nazis."

Philemon thought that the doctor's muttering sounded pleasant and comforting. He began to put on his shirt again.

"No, my young friend, we shall not put on our shirt. Alas, we shall take it off immediately anyway. Ver-rückte Menschen."

He wrote a few lines on the paper which the constable held in his hand, and pushed them both toward the door.

"So, go in there and get the whole thing over with. And thank me that you only get six blows. Poor child."

On a table in the next room lay a young Negro with a bloody back who wept in despair. A white constable was loosening the straps which held his hands and gave him a few last friendly admonitions.

"Shut up, you black scoundrel. Have you learned how to behave now? We'll take care of you, if you come here again. Get down from the table now. Quick I say. And shut up, or else you'll get more. Take him out to the guardroom, Mdluli. He is going with the prisoner transport this afternoon to the central prison. Quick!"

A native constable stood, quiet and serious, at the door and watched the scene with wide-awake eyes without changing his expression. A couple of young white policemen stood by the window and smoked and held a gay conversation. "No, you don't mean that you run around with that gal, she looks like a pug in her face." "You should talk, your old crow with 'falsies' is certainly nothing to have. Mine has at least her own choppers. And her old man has money like grass . . . ."

The third constable came up to them. In his hand he had the paper which he had taken from Philemon's keeper.

"Look at this, boys. Look. Eight cuts reduced to six because of weak lungs. The old Jew has thought this up. Pure sabotage. Soon we won't be able to touch the natives. I suppose the idea is that we shall be servants of the blacks, if he is permitted to continue."

The others looked at the paper and at Philemon.

"Forceful resistance and abuse against a conductor,"



said one of them "This is probably one of those young Communists who want to rule us. Six cuts, hey? The idiots don't know how niggers should be taken."

He put down his cigarette and took down a narrow leather whip from the wall.

"This little ape here I can take care of. We will do the best possible with the six blows."

Philemon was frightened out of his wits, and kept his eyes on the three police. He knew enough of their language to follow the conversation, and he understood what awaited him. He made a last desperate try to defend himself.

"Excuse me, nkosana, but I did not make any forceful resistance. It isn't true what it says there in the paper."

The police took hold of his arm and wrung it up behind his back and looked at him ironically.

"So it isn't true? You lie also? You are not tractable yet?"

He twisted the arm again so that Philemon cried out.

"Does it feel better now? Up on the table and lie on your stomach."

The black constable took Philemon's shirt and helped him up. Then he tied his hands and stepped to the side. The white man went over to the window and took a drag on his cigarette again. Then he went back, raised the whip, aimed well and hit with all his force. Philemon's whole body jerked, and he screamed. There was a long streak on his black back and the blood began to seep out where the whip had forced into the skin. The policeman made a pause, measured again and hit, methodically and with all his might in the

blow. Then one blow more, and one more, and one more, and the last blow, which landed just above the belt. It could not have been done more effectively.

He put down the whip with a sense of loss.

"One can do a lot with six blows," he said, and inspected his work carefully. Then he went over to the window and continued his interrupted conversation with his colleagues.

Philemon shook from sobbing, and tried to get free of the straps. Then the black constable released his hands, helped him on with his shirt without a word, and led him toward the door.

Philemon came out on the steps in the blinding sunshine, still shaking and sobbing. He sat down on the lowest step and tried to hold the shirt away from the skin on his back.

A shadow fell on him, and he looked up in fear. It was Frederick Örn who stood in front of him. He had waited outside of the police station to take the boy home after the punishment.

"Philemon, my boy, how are you? Can you go to the car? Take my hand. Does it hurt a lot?"

"Yes, umfundisi, it hurts a lot."

"Poor you. We will go to the clinic and get your back taken care of."

I am going to persuade the doctor to give him an injection of morphine, so he can sleep, thought Örn.

He led the boy over to the car and helped him up into the front seat. Philemon sat leaning forward and held his hands on the instrument board so that he would not touch the back of the seat. Örn jumped in from the other side and started the car. Away from

this place as fast and as far as possible. But the boy groaned at the bumps and he had to slow his speed.

"Philemon," began Örn, "first of all I want to tell you that I believe in you. I am sure that you are innocent, and that they have been terrible toward you. I know how it feels. I got a licking one time as a boy—not at all as much as you, only a little bit—for a thing that I had not done, and I almost hated my father that time."

Philemon stopped sobbing and looked attentively at the missionary. Now and then his whole body twitched from pain. He tried to begin to talk, but did not have the strength, and began to look at the road again.

"You understand, they thought that I had stolen money out of my father's desk drawer, and they believe that to this day, I guess. But I hadn't, though no one believed me. But you are luckier because there are at least some who believe you. I believe you, and your parents will, and all at the mission station, too."

Philemon brightened up a bit. He thought of the reception at Edwaleni. A group of respectful, listening school companions who would listen to his story. That would be a big day for him. Just think that umfundisi also. . . .

He darkened again and began to talk.

"But umfundisi, there was no one who *knew* that umfundisi had not done it. But the conductors knew, and they only lied about me."

Örn nodded.

"Yes, Philemon, you are absolutely right. It was terrible of them, real mean. But you can believe that I gave it to them afterward, and they have a bad con-

science now. Some day perhaps they will come and beg you for forgiveness. That would be good, eh what?"

Such things do not happen here, thought Örn. But one can believe in wonders, if one wants to.

Philemon nodded and began to imagine the dramatic day when two crestfallen white conductors would come to Edwaleni and ask to speak with him. The whole school would stand and look on when he met them with lofty and scornful expression. . . .

The road began to dance before his eyes.

"Umfundisi, I am getting sick."

Örn stopped the car.

"Perhaps you can lie in the back seat, then you will be better?"

He went out and opened the door from the other side.

"Try and get out now. There now. Lie on your stomach, and hold your face over the edge. There. And then your legs in the air, and then you will have room. Is it all right now? It is still best that we continue, so that you get home to the hospital. Your mother is concerned about you, too, you can imagine. So. Now I'll close the door."

He got up in front and started the car.

"Does it feel better now?"

"Yes, umfundisi."

They drove a while quietly. Then Örn slowed down and began to talk again.

"Philemon, you perhaps don't want to talk now, but we are soon home, and there is something I must tell you first. The big boys and the people in the location

will probably talk to you about this thing, and you must hear what I have to say first. I think you are big enough to understand it. They will likely say something like this: 'You got a whipping just because you have black skin. There is no justice for us Negroes. The white people always try to torment and scare us, and they want everything for themselves. If you had been white, they would never have treated you like that. The conductors did like that only because they are white and you are black.' They will talk like that to you. And then perhaps you will begin to hate the white people. But you should not do that. Then there will come something bad and mean into your soul, and you will never become a really able and good man. You understand, we must do all we can so that the natives will get it better, and we must tell the white people that they must not do like this. But one should not hate. Then you only poison yourself, and are sad and unhappy. And you should remember that all white people are not like that. There are many who are fair and good, and try to help the blacks as much as they can. And it is too bad about people who are mean. They are really small and wretched in their souls. He who can forgive is a big and free person. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Yes, umfundisi."

"And do you think that you can remember what I have said, when the big boys talk to you, and say that all the white people are cruel and mean? That one should do all that one can to make them better, but not hate them?"

"Yes, umfundisi," was heard from the back seat.



Örn wanted very much to see the boy's face now. He wondered how he would take it. Best to ask Hlongwane to talk to him also.

The trip continued slowly through the muddy alleys of Stoneville with the missionary at the wheel and the little Negro boy in the back seat. There was more than the seat that separated them. They came from two worlds as unlike each other as they possibly could be. The missionary groped among his thoughts in order to find the right words and really get to the heart of the Negro boy. But he found no words.



## CHAPTER

# 7

IT WAS several years later, and a good deal had changed in the Zondi family. The father in the family indeed had not changed. Enoch was just as impersonal and naive as always, his kinky hair and his thin beard were just a little more gray. He was the kind of person who never does things really poorly or really well, and who goes through life with his back bent, straight ahead, as if through a long, gray tunnel. He had not aged nor been consumed by ambition, by desire for prestige, or by disappointed hopes; and he would undoubtedly become very old, to the disgust of his relatives, and live on as long as he was able to chew sour milk. He was left alone by people, like sparrows who are too insignificant to be killed. There are some such people—more often among blacks than among whites—who do not have more fire and concern in themselves than barely to stay alive, and are only kept in motion by a weak flame which does not burn them up.

Selina was different. The flame burned brightly in her—to little advantage—and she had aged and become an old woman in a few years in Johannesburg.

She struggled very hard but got nowhere in Stoneville's hard world—something like a tiger in a cage that walks around and around, and uses up energy and covers hundreds of miles, without moving from the spot. She had hoped and dreamed day and night for many years, but her longing led to nothing new. What she had seen and heard in the Danish kitchen in Durban was only to her detriment. It just did not work. Neither was she happy with the idea of postponing the goal of her hopes to a life after death. Something should happen now, here, in this life. But a Negro woman's life is not changed so easily, and as a result of her longing she became more and more of an introvert, which made her harder and more troublesome every year.

There was quite a good deal that was wasted in Selina, which was a pity. She had a not insignificant fund of tenderness, courage, and energy which changed into bitterness, frustration, and nagging.

Philemon should have been able to make her happy. The doors were open to him. But he grew away from her, and seldom came and talked with her after he left for school. He wanted to go out into the world, and he did not want to be bothered by his old mother, and see her troubled look and her clumsy attempts to help.

He did not want to hear about his sisters either. The oldest one had chosen that profession which is easiest at hand on the streets of the location, and that even before she had reached the years of indiscretion. She was taught by older colleagues to paint herself—which does not enhance an African face; white powder on the

nose looks like gray dust, like a negative picture, and red paint on charcoal looks like a four-year-old's first awkward attempts with the paintbox. The two younger girls would go the same way, that was apparent. They had not gotten to school, and had neither thoughts nor ambition. One could not expect more of them than the fundamental physical functioning. They fitted perfectly into the hopeless world of the location.

When Philemon finished school Hlongwane had tried to have him study further to become a pastor. But this did not appeal to Philemon. He wanted to have more fun than that. First he had taken a job in the store of an Indian Mohammedan who sold small wares to Negroes, mostly old bicycles, worn-out clocks which did not work, used gramophones, and evil smelling perfume. There they played and made discordant sounds all day long to lure buyers, and newly-arrived blacks from the country stood and stared in wonder at civilization's shining products. Philemon was supposed to try to get them to give up their hard-earned money and to take trash on credit. But he only stayed there a month. The Indian refused to pay his salary in cash. He received goods—an old victrola with a broken spring—and Philemon left in anger. He was not to be considered an uncivilized fool. Then he was a delivery boy for half a year at a white grocery store in town, but was fired when a couple of tsotsis stole the delivery bicycle from him. At last he got a job in the office of a Communist paper, where he had to do the cleaning and to address newspapers. Officially the newspaper was not called Communist—that is forbidden in South Africa. It was owned by an associa-



tion which for the time being went by the name of The Democratic Peace Congress, and which was directed by the Comintern via India, and which the police very well knew. But it was allowed to continue only because it was easier to keep track of the agitators if their address was known. The Association had had several predecessors, which had been broken up by the authorities, and whose leaders had been imprisoned and forbidden to speak or write publicly. But it had always come to life again under new leadership and new name, and always including the words "peace" or "democratic"; and the police each time had had a lot of trouble in tracking down the new headquarters. The latest office was on the third floor over a courtyard in a slum area where only Indians and Chinese lived. The whole front of the street was lined with stores with queer foreign signs, and in the windows was a striking collection of Indian pictures with many-armed, fiercely grinning gods, Chinese elephant tusk carvings, American film magazines, and cheap mouth organs and trinkets. All the stores looked alike, and one rarely saw any buyers in them. It was a mystery how they could do business. Old Mohammedans with fezzes stood and waited in the doorways with a far-away look in their eyes, resigned to the futility of the shops, but unable to think of any other occupation.

It was a livelier group which went in and out of the Communist back office.

Indians dominated the gathering, oily, slick-combed youngsters of the intellectual type with glasses and European clothes. Their political jargon seemed false and professional, and politeness changed to arrogance

whenever there was a chance. But the leadership was in their hands. Behind their backs they felt the powerful country of India, which hated South Africa's white government, and had their eyes steadily turned toward Africa's empty expanses—the land of the future for the crowded brown millions. Coupled with the Asiatic aspirations went the Comintern's schemes of conquest, masquerading as sympathy for the liberation of the Negroes. There was a stream of newspapers and propaganda instructions, mostly in queer Indian tongues, which gave the police and censors gray hair and which sometimes was also highly unwelcome on the part of the Communist officials. They received orders to stir up the Negroes against West Germany's rearmament and against America's defense of Formosa. The propaganda material was dutifully spread about in the location, but the gain was small, since very few of the Negroes even knew where Germany or Formosa were. They understood better the railings against England and the Boer regime.

Now and then some Europeans came into the office, too. They were mostly swarthy individuals with East European or German names, war-damaged people with hate in their souls against humanity, victims of concentration camps, and some well polished Communist officials who spoke or kept quiet, according to orders, and who had voluntarily said farewell to spontaneity and thinking of their own.

Idealism did not run high in the office, there was no excitement, no sympathy. Reports of social injustices were studied with cold accuracy, and were judged for their propaganda value. They were not concerned as

to whether people suffered or not, as long as the suffering could be used for the party's aims. Nor was any one excited because the police made a raid now and then, and took papers and officials with them from the office. It was a completely understandable procedure which would, of course, continue in the future except, as they hoped, in another regime and then more effectively, and not so nonchalantly and superciliously as the white government did it. The newspaper was prohibited about every third month, when it had had time to produce enough treasonable material, but it came out again under another name, and repeated exactly the same ideas.

Sometimes Negroes came in, too, stately, serious men, and then the whole atmosphere changed in the office. The Negroes were, of course, the most important people in the movement, at least officially, and it depended upon them whether or not the Communists would make any progress. The poverty of the black millions was the only thing that could give the party fertile soil, and without the Negroes it was doomed to remain a little group of powerless theorists. But the blacks gave them much trouble. They were never completely dependable party members. They took the social needs so very seriously, they had their own ideas, and did not want to obey orders from the headquarters beyond the sea. You had to keep them in good humor, let them feel as if they were leaders, and get them to step into the breach when there were riots or trouble. And when Negroes came to the office, the Indians and white officials had to act like idealists, and speak in serious and excited tones, and let the

blacks feel that they were their dependable friends and champions. It was necessary to get them to look toward Russia, where all are good and happy and no one is fettered and hungry, that wonderful country where Negroes are treated with respect and become ministers and generals. But they were troublesome to work with, and great was the relief when they left.

The party had orders to keep the hatred between the whites and blacks alive at any price. But the Negroes lost the quality so easily. Many of them worked in white people's homes, where the atmosphere was friendly and happy, and where they almost felt like members of the family. In such places their revolutionary interest became limp and unreliable. The most dangerous from the viewpoint of the party were the church members. They associated with white missionaries as with friends, equals, and followed their peaceful and reformatory line. At the most they wanted to straighten out this and that which was wrong in the community, and then live in peace beside the white people.

Even the most radical of the blacks, those who had no love for the white people, could easily get off the track. They were too jolly and human, they went to church on Sundays—queer native sects with ecstasies and drums—and they had nationalistic aspirations and pride of race. Their greatest asset for the party was their ability to flare up and lose their sense and moderation, and attack the police with stones and canes. Then there would be shooting and jailings, and then the paper would get hot stuff for articles.

But the Communists had to have at least a few de-

pendable Negroes, and it was decided to engage some educated black youngsters in the office of the newspaper, and to nurture them from the beginning in thinking along the party lines. When Philemon saw the advertisement and responded, he was received with open arms. The Indian editor, Joseph Shavaneshan, examined him carefully during their first conversation. An intelligent and wide-awake youngster, he thought, not like these dull "niggers" who have streamed to the office since the advertisement appeared. He spoke good English, too. It only remained to train him in the right way, and make him fully loyal to the party.

Shavaneshan sat without moving and looked at him, his gaze hidden behind gold-rimmed glasses. The Indian was faultlessly dressed in a black suit and gleaming white shirt collar, despite the heat, and looked like a schoolteacher at a conference. But there was nothing truehearted nor reliable about Shavaneshan. He seemed unreliable, impersonal, and frigid.

Of course, Philemon did not notice this, naturally. He let his eyes roam over the room, which was surprisingly elegant in comparison with the dark backyard and the dirty quarters with their trashy shops. There was nothing that indicated that it was a political headquarters. The walls were lined only with expressionless sceneries and a large portrait of a Negro, the president of the African Congress, to make a good impression on visiting natives.

Philemon had grown at least a foot since he had come to Edwaleni school, but he was not yet among the tall. His trousers ended a few inches above his shoes, his coat was threadbare, and his shirt, one of



Örn's cast-offs, was so large around the neck that he could stick his whole chin into it. But he had already acquired a certain confidence in his manner while at school as head boy in his class and the leader of the other boys, and he had increased in cunning during the time that he had worked in the city. He was eager and ready for anything and hardly burdened with any principles or ideas—except that he did not want to go back to Stoneville location. Without dispute, he was not like other African boys, but not so unlike that he thought and brooded about life's riddles, as the young people in more northern countries are sometimes said to do. Africa's warm and generous nature had for thousands of years spared the blacks from all strains, and the tradition to take life calmly was strongly rooted in them and had only been rubbed off a little at the edges by the modern times. But spiritual inertia has different degrees, and Philemon was one of the least sluggish.

"Mr. Zondi," began Shavaneshan when Philemon sat down, "do you know what we do here in the office?"

Philemon had never been called "mister" before, and it took him some time to recover from the surprise. Then he stretched and answered:

"Yes, you print a newspaper, don't you?"

"Yes, but do you know what color the newspaper has?"

"Yes, I presume it is the one you have posted down there on the street on a case, gray-blue paper?"

Philemon's eyes continued to roam around the room. This looked much nicer than Örn's shabby of-



fice, where writing paper and envelopes lay messing it up in crooked piles.

Shavaneshan smiled most dutifully.

"That is not the kind of color I mean, although I appreciate that you observed it. I mean political color. We are Communists, do you know what that is?"

"Mmh, that is something the police have prohibited, isn't it?"

"Yes, what more do you know about it? Do you know what sort of ideas we have?"

"No," answered Philemon without any great interest. He wondered what he would get as salary, and if they would give him a bed so that he would not have to live at home in Stoneville.

Virgin soil, thought Shavaneshan. This is shaping up well.

He put off the telephone receiver so that he would not be interrupted, and straightened up to begin the first lesson.

"Listen, young man. You will get a well-paid and good job here, but then . . . ."

"How much?" Philemon sat tense.

"Ten pounds a month, but then . . . ."

"Ten pounds? Yes, thank you, thank you so much."

Philemon brightened up and leaned forward over the desk in order at last to give the Indian his undivided attention. Ten pounds, that was almost double what he had dared hope. He would soon be able to buy his own bicycle.

"But then," continued Shavaneshan, "you must do as we say and learn our party program. Listen care-

fully now. You know that your own people suffer, and that the white people oppress them?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you know that we Indians suffer, too?"

Philemon had never heard that. The Indians usually had shops and fine cars and swindled the Negroes of their money. But he felt it wisest to agree. Ten pounds is a lot of money.

"Yes, sir, they suffer too."

"And you know that the natives are not allowed to vote and to buy land and weapons and to go out at night here in the city, simply because the white people rule?"

"Yes, sir."

"But now, you see, we have formed the Communist party which will change all this. The white people are going to be driven out of the country, and there is going to be a government of Negroes only—well, perhaps a few Indians too—and then there will be money and land and freedom for all colored people. Then perhaps you yourself can move into a white man's house and drive his car."

Philemon became more and more interested. He had, of course, sometimes heard similar things from native agitators in the location, but they were considered mostly to be just big talkers, and people did not take them seriously. But here was a fine gentleman, finer than Örn, with a real office and everything, and ten pounds a month to give away.

"Yes, sir. But how are you going to do it? Of course, the white police have revolvers?"

"Yes, Mr. Zondi, I know that. But we have thought

of that. We are going to prepare everything before we attack. We are going to get weapons from Russia which is a Communistic country. Do you know anything about Russia?"

"Yes, Russia has 180 million inhabitants and is bordered on the north by the Arctic Sea, on the east by the Pacific Ocean, on the west by Finland, Poland, and Rumania. It is a dictator state, where people cannot speak freely, and where there are large slave camps."

Philemon was proud to show his schooling.

Shavaneshan smiled widely and without pleasure.

"So, the capitalists teach you such things in their schools. Then let me tell you that that is only propaganda lies. In Russia all are free to speak and think as they wish and all have the right to vote whether they are black or white. And all money there is divided equally so that no one goes hungry."

I am perhaps too theoretical, thought Shavaneshan. I will have to sink to the level of a Negro boy.

"In Russia," he added, "you can even go up and hit a white man, and nothing happens!"

Philemon did not get noticeably enthusiastic. He had been raised by Selina, Hlongwane, and Örn, and was quite free from race hatred. But the Indian apparently wanted him to be inspired, and ten pounds was a lot of money, so he tried to appear pleased. And the Indian treated him as an *equal*.

Shavaneshan got up and offered his hand.

"Yes, you see," he said in a friendly way, "it is going to be like that when we get the power. Now

you can go to the newspaper office and learn your trade. And then we are going to have some lessons in the evenings in party politics with you and a few other African comrades. But if the police come, then I have said nothing, do you understand? And you know nothing about Communism and Russia other than the stupid things you learned in school. Do you understand?"

"Yes, of course," answered Philemon, and understood very well. If the police came it was necessary to lie. It was always like that in Stoneville.

"You are going to do the addressing for our newspaper. But we keep the addresses in a secret drawer, and if there is a raid you must immediately push in the drawer. So never take more addresses out than you need for the minute."

"I understand, sir."

That sounded exciting, thought Philemon. If only the police would not come and take him to forced labor on some farm. That is the way it had gone with his brother Jonathan whom they had never heard of since then. Philemon hardly remembered any longer how he looked. He was a little bothered about that prospect.

Philemon was allowed to live in an attic room together with three other African boys in their twenties and a young Indian who was at home in the Communistic belief, and who was to direct the thinking of the Negroes in the desired direction. Negroes were, of course, forbidden to live there—according to law they should live in the Negro quarters outside the city and ride to and from their work—but one violation more

or less of the law did not make much difference at the Communist headquarters.

The other Negro boys were even more immature and ignorant than Philemon, and came as did he from homes where nothing was read or discussed. They had already lived a couple of weeks at the party office, and had learned quite a good deal from the young Indian. His name was Mohammed Ibrahim, and he worked as typesetter for the newspaper. But nights he devoted completely to educating the boys. It was unbearably hot and crowded up in the attic under the metal roof, but the boys at least had each his own bed and were delighted, even though the beds stood so close that they had to get into them from the ends. Mohammed had kept the discussion going every evening, as discreetly as possible, and had thrown a stick on the fire now and then, when the conversation began to die down. He had thrown out a whole lot of queer contentions, but it was not in the interest of the Negroes to doubt, as long as they were satisfied there.

Philemon was not as meek as the rest, and he soon learned that it was not so dangerous to talk up to Mohammed Ibrahim, as long as he stayed on the good side of Shavaneshan.

The first evening he remained quiet. He enjoyed the comfortable bed which was pure luxury in comparison with the one he was used to in Stoneville. With awe he watched Mohammed's polished evening toilette and his preparations for bed. The Indian brushed his teeth, which must be the height of civilization; he washed his hands and brushed his black, shining hair a long time. If one gets up in the world, one must, no



doubt, begin with all this, thought Philemon. But, brushing and combing the hair, only white people and Indians can do that, he thought with a sigh. We are not created that way. But one could perhaps clip a lane down the middle of the kinks, so that it would look like a parting. The Indian even wore pajamas while the Negro boys slept in their shirts which never came off their bodies. But how pale and thin he looked. He could not be worth much as a fighter. You could beat him up like nothing.

The second night Philemon began to take part in the discussion in the attic. It was religion that they were debating. Mohammed Ibrahim had orders to be careful with this question. The Negroes were almost always religious, and besides, these boys came from mission schools. But they would never be dependable Communists, if they were not sooner or later freed from this superstition. One step in the right direction would be if they could accept a native nationalist religion, which harbored hatred against the white people.

The Negro boys went to bed quietly, and waited for Mohammed's initiative. It was only half past seven in the evening, and the boys had just finished their work and had eaten. But they had no place to go and no chairs to sit on in the attic, so they might just as well go to bed. But it was still light in the room.

"Well, what do you, Philemon Zondi, think about religion," the Indian began in a tone which was to seem easy and casual.

"That, ya, that is . . . well, I don't know," answered Philemon clumsily. That was no problem for him. Religion was a self-evident part of existence. You



could just as well have asked him what he thought of the sun or the grass or the air.

"You know, of course, that religion is something that the capitalists—I mean the rich—have thought up to keep poor people down?"

Philemon's mind began to function.

"You mean that pastors and such don't want people to have it good?"

"Yes, exactly, they work for the interests of the capitalists."

Philemon began to remember a few arguments from school. A black teacher had discussed something like it once in order that they might not be entirely unprepared.

"But our pastor, Hlongwane, he is not hired by capitalists. He gets most of his pay from the collections in church, and they are poor people. A part of it he gets from Sweden, and the missionaries say that they are mostly poor people who give there, too."

"Then the missionary is lying. We know that the mission gets its money from American imperialists who want to keep the colored people down."

Philemon kept quiet. He knew that the missionary could be ill-tempered and troublesome sometimes, but that he should tell a lie, that was an entirely new thought. What if Mohammed Ibrahim was right. He perhaps lied, too. But why should he do that? The Communists were nice, and gave them good pay.

"Anyway it is religion which is keeping Africa's people down in poverty, and prevents them from improving," continued Mohammed. "You realize that, of course?"

"Well . . . I don't know. No, indeed. It is the missionary who built our school, and if I had not gotten in there and learned English, and also to read and write and such things, then I would not have gotten this job here, and then I could not have talked in any language with you. You don't know any Zulu."

Philemon began to be obstinate, and hunted around in his mind for more arguments from his discussions at school.

"Aha," answered the Indian, "but why did the pastors do that? They were sure that you would be a pastor, too, and help them to keep the congregation down. It was lucky that we got hold of you."

Philemon leaned on his elbows, and looked over at the Indian's bed.

"Yes, but they teach us other things, too. They have a trade school at Edwaleni and teach us carpentry and such items, if we want to, so that we can get good wages when we finish school. And they teach us to build real houses from bricks. And then they have hospitals, too. All that is not to keep people down-trodden, is it?"

Philemon put his head on the pillow again. Mohammed Ibrahim did not look him in the eye, but only lay looking at the ceiling as he talked.

"Bosh, that," continued the Indian in even tone, "that is only camouflage, I mean bait, exactly like putting a worm on the hook to get the fish to bite."

Philemon pondered a while. Then he thought of an answer that sounded good.

"Then I think that the pastors have forgotten to put on the hook. We have not seen any hook, but only the

bait. I would have been poor and lived in Stoneville now, if the missionary had not helped me. Isn't that so?"

Mohammed laughed reassuringly. It would not do to provoke the boys.

"Yes, it looks good on the outside, that stuff about religion. But we, we know what is behind it. It is only capitalism and imperialism that has built up the whole church with all its tricks in order to prevent world revolution. You have only read a certain kind of books that the pastors have given you, and you can see for yourself that you have become polite and subservient toward the white people. You can have other books from us, and then you can see what is behind the scenes of the church. You will hear much that will surprise you."

I will have to speak to Shavaneshan, thought Mohammed. This boy is troublesome. We cannot use him, I guess. But then perhaps Shavaneshan will report that I am no good in activating the Negroes. I had better keep quiet.

But Mohammed had made more progress than he thought. Philemon lay a long time and pondered. Perhaps it was only foolish things that he had learned in school. The Communists really knew a lot, and they knew the big wide world. They could no doubt help him to get ahead.

The next night Shavaneshan himself gave a lecture on the party program. Again it was religion that was discussed. That was the main thing when it concerned the Negroes. If they could only be torn loose from the church, there was not much that prevented them

from becoming Communists. They did not own land, they could not vote nor did they have freedom to move about. There was not much to lose. It was easy to paint the picture of a state with happier conditions. It was not so hard to get them to hate the privileged white people either. But the obstruction was the large mission churches with five thousand schools and a couple of million members. They fought indeed against the idea of white supremacy, but they were just as great enemies of Communism and race hatred propaganda. It was possible, of course, to co-operate with church-minded natives in certain practical points—when it meant action against poor wages and race laws—but they remained loyal to the church, and wanted to control the fight in their own way. And the party planned to go to the bottom with Philemon and his comrades. They were deluged with descriptions of the church's terrible misdeeds in other countries, and Philemon who only had his small experiences in Edwaleni to rely on was soon silenced. What Mohammed and Shavaneshan said, must be true, because they have real printed books where it is written. And the party gave him a good bed and good food and money.

At home in Edwaleni, Hlongwane and Örn sat, each at his side of the table, and talked. They were discussing Philemon. Selina had come and complained that he never came home, and Hlongwane was troubled because he never appeared in church either.

"I know where he is," said Hlongwane. "He is in the Communist office, and that is not good. I think

you had better go there, umfundisi. They will perhaps only kick me out, but they are more careful with a white man."

"Perhaps so," answered Frederick. "Do you think the Communists have converted him so that this is why he does not come to church?"

"That can be it very easily," said Hlongwane thoughtfully. "Well, you will have to go there, umfundisi. There is another thing, too. If they begin to argue with me, I cannot answer them as well, and then they will scorn me. I do not like them, and I feel that they are lying, but they can talk well, and I stand there nonplussed. Can you go?"

"Yes, of course, naturally. But it won't be easy. Do you think I can persuade Philemon to come home with me?"

"It will really be troublesome, umfundisi. He probably has a job there, and we will have to get him another position, if we are going to have a chance."

Örn reflected.

"Listen, we have to have another teacher in the primary grades. Do you think Philemon would do for that?"

Hlongwane became eager.

"Yes, just that, we must do that. We will offer him the job, and then he will surely come back."

"But do you think he will be good as a teacher?"

"No, not particularly but if we can save him in that way . . . ."

Örn could not help but tease him.

"You mean that we should sacrifice the children,

and give them a poor teacher, in order to save your old favorite?"

Hlongwane laughed.

"Yes, I mean just that. But he won't be so bad. He will learn in time."

"All right, Hlongwane, I go along with that. I will offer him the job, if only I get the inspector to give government grant. . . . By the way, do you know that this is the last time we will be able to appoint a teacher ourselves? Now the state wants to take over the schools and we will have nothing to say."

Hlongwane nodded.

"Yes, I know. They think, of course, that they can run the schools better than we. Haven't we run the school decently, we and the others?"

Örn sighed.

"Yes, at least we ourselves think so. But the government seems to think that missionaries are too liberal and teach the natives to become like the white people. And then we mingle with them too much, and shake hands with them, and eat together and the like, and that does not fit into the government's system where there is to be a barrier between races. So now there is going to be a new spirit in the schools, I suppose."

Hlongwane looked bothered.

"Do you think it will succeed?"

"Perhaps. But it won't be so easy. They will have to drag along with the teachers we have trained for a long while. And they probably will not get others than missionaries to teach in the seminaries either."

Hlongwane chuckled.



"Ah, ha, that is right. There isn't a single native teacher who is not a church member. But umfundisi, have you noticed that the Communists have never said a mean word about the state's taking the schools from us? They must hate us even more than they hate the nationalist party."

"Naturally. Naturally. The race laws are the Communists' big chance, but the church only takes the wind out of their sails. It is the same in Kenya, too. The Mau-Mau movement is mostly devoted to killing mission teachers."

Hlongwane sat quietly while Örn filled his pipe. Then he began to speak again, slowly and thoughtfully.

"Umfundisi, you and I who belong to the same church and have the same profession, just think if we could not meet and talk because we are different in the color of our skin? That would certainly be ridiculous."

Örn nodded.

"Yes, that would be ridiculous. But people who have never associated with people of another race, they can probably be made to believe that it is impossible. Both the blacks and the whites seem to be quite sure about that. But they will never get you and me to that point."

Hlongwane got up, went over to the window, and looked out at the schoolboys who played outside. His heavy black face looked dark and threatening.

"No, umfundisi," he said. "One can get furious just thinking about it. I know you Örn, and your merits and failings, and I want to work together with you in this church. Nothing will upset that."

Örn looked with deep satisfaction at the broad shoulders. He sat quietly a long time. There was not much more to say about that matter.

"From one thing to another, Hlongwane, we should take the chance and get rid of one of the teachers before the power is taken away from us."

The native turned around.

"You mean Ziba?"

"Yes, he is quite worthless. He does more harm than good."

"Yes," said Hlongwane, thoughtfully and scrutinizingly, "he is lazy and not dependable. Although he has his good sides, too. But it would probably be wisest to get rid of him."

Örn smiled to himself.

You mean that Ziba is a rotter whom it will be grand to kick out, he thought. But one never says that. One never maintains that a person is through and through incapable and worthless, because then you seem temperamental and unbalanced. One assumes a thoughtful mien, and says that of course Ziba has his good points, but . . . Then one is wise and just. Just think how much you have become like us, Hlongwane.

Aloud he only said:

"Yes, of course, he isn't so suitable. You can just as well go into the schoolhouse on your way home and tell him to come here."

Hlongwane turned around at the door.

"It is going to seem strange when we only have the church and the hospital left. It really seems hard to be cut off from the school."

Örn nodded agreement.

"Yes, now our governing is at an end. Now we shall see if we can influence the teachers without the means of enforcing our will. We will have to try to be noble personalities and irresistible and the like."

Hlongwane laughed a little.

"That will be a strain. We will, no doubt, long for the good old times again. Wonder how it will be in the future."

They looked at one another and their eyes betrayed troubled spirits. Then the black man went out and closed the door. He wandered slowly and thoughtfully along the garden walk, took the wrong way, and forgot to call Ziba from school.

Örn was out on his rescue expedition to win back the bewildered Philemon. He drove through Stoneville's dirty alleys, and came out on the asphalt road which leads into the big city. The road went along empty fields for about six miles, the buffer area between the city of the whites and the city of the blacks. "Foolish that I chose just this day," mumbled the pastor to himself. "You never know what can happen today."

Along the way stood patrols of black and white police, half of each, and looked suspiciously at all cars on the road from the location. The black policemen were armed with spears, the white men had rifles over their shoulders, or machine guns, which only occurred when disturbances were feared. That very day about two hundred black families were to be moved from their homes, because they happened to lie on the white

side of the buffer zone, and there was a suspicion that there would be resistance and riots. Farther away, near the black part of the city, which was to be done away with, the lines of policemen were closer together. There seemed to be a couple of thousand constables in action. Here and there behind the police stood quiet natives, but no signs of riot were noticed.

Örn became more and more oppressed before this overwhelming show of might. It felt as if the air stood still.

Then he had to drive to one side on a narrow street and permit a long caravan of military trucks with Negroes and their belongings to pass on their way to a newly built location outside of town. Farther away he saw still another row of army cars which were being loaded in front of the houses of the natives. Right near his car he recognized an English missionary who stood on the street and talked to the Negroes. A white constable came up and gave the missionary orders to leave. The natives quietly remained.

He continued driving, and suddenly there were no police. He was inside the white people's city, and there life went on as if nothing had happened. The car crawled slowly along in the traffic jam between the skyscrapers. The sidewalks were filled with a motley mass of people. There were well-dressed white businessmen who rushed around with portfolios as if everything hung on minutes. There were promenading well-painted and high-heeled women, who obviously had a great deal of time to give to their appearance. Black errand boys trudged along, without being dragged along in the city's bustle, and Indian fruit

sellers wearing turbans stood on street corners and offered their wares. There appeared people of all kinds and tongues, quiet Chinese, bearded Jewish rabbis, blond North Europeans, and swarthy Syrians. In Johannesburg, the great gathering place for immigrants from all corners of the world, one saw only an occasional person of the kind who ruled the land, the Boers. They lived mostly in the country and in small towns, and if they came to the big city they were easily recognized by their dress and manners. Johannesburg did not have much attraction for them. Other languages than theirs were spoken there, and it was a hectic and worldly life which was out of harmony with their calm traditions.

At last Örn managed to get through the city traffic, and hunted his way to the Indian quarter where the Communist headquarters were. He parked the car on the street, and had to ask in several shops before he found anyone who was willing to tell him where the Democratic Peace Congress office was located.

Shavaneshan sat at his desk as he received the visitor.

"My name is Örn, missionary," he said introducing himself. "I would like to speak with a native boy, Philemon Zondi, who works here."

Shavaneshan did not change his expression, but it could be detected in his voice that he was not pleased to see Örn there.

"What is your visit about? Is there any message I can give to the boy?"

"No, that is not possible. I must meet him myself. He belongs to my congregation."

Shavaneshan stiffened yet more.

"It is working time now, and we cannot allow our employees to be disturbed. If it is about religious matters, you will have to arrange that in after hours."

Örn had seated himself, but now he got up again and looked the Indian straight in the eye. His Mussolini chin stuck out stubbornly.

"May I speak privately to the boy?" he asked, his sharp tone of voice continuing.

Shavaneshan hesitated a minute. Then he shrugged his shoulders, got up, and went to get Philemon from the newspaper office.

The boy brightened up when he recognized Örn, but then he quickly changed his expression with a side glance at Shavaneshan. He was not supposed to like missionaries any longer.

"May I speak to the boy alone," said Örn, still in a sharp tone.

Apparently it did not pay to be polite to that party boss, who seemed to invite a thrashing.

But now Shavaneshan was stubborn.

"No," he answered in a caustic and shrill tone. "You can talk in my presence. Zondi here is hired by us now, and he is under my orders."

"All right," said Örn. He turned directly toward the boy, and spoke in a clear and even tone. Now there was not a trace of hesitation in his voice.

"Philemon, I have come to ask you to leave this place. You are nineteen years of age, and you can do as you want to, but your parents ask that you come home. And we, your pastors, ask you to come back to church. What you learn here is not right."



Shavaneshan came nearer, and sat down on the edge of the desk.

"How is that," he said and looked back and forth between Philemon and Örn. "Why is what he learns here not right? You are a missionary and work as we do for liberation of the natives. We have the same purpose."

"That is not at all true," said Örn.

Now his voice shook with anger. "The mission works for the liberation of the native, but we use only such methods as really are for their good. The mission has soon taught half of this country's natives to read, and we have saved thousands of lives in our hospitals, and we have bettered their conditions in many ways. When the natives' education has risen to a higher level, it will be impossible for the white people to refuse them their citizen's rights. That is a sensible method. But you, you have not done anything of the kind. You have only talked and incited them, and you are irresponsible and want to send them against machine guns when they have no chance to win. How much do you care about what happens to the natives, just so you can stir up trouble which serves the interests of the Cominform? I am *not* on the line. I decline to stand in the same category as you."

Shavaneshan kept calm. He answered in a cool tone:

"Yes, you are perhaps right that we do not have the same purpose. You are servants of the nationalist government, and try to make the natives quiet and obedient. On the other hand, we in the Peace Congress fight for their freedom."

Neither of them had any hopes of convincing the

other. Everything was said merely for Philemon's sake. It was over him they were fighting. And Philemon enjoyed the situation. His little fox face was excited and interested, and he took in every word.

"That isn't true," answered Örn. "You know very well that we have always fought against the white supremacy ideas. But the difference is that we have a feeling of responsibility and only do what really amounts to something and which lies within the area of possibility. It would be easy to whip up hate, and send the natives into a hopeless revolution. After that it would only be ten times worse for them. And it would be worst of all if you Communists came into power. Then they would lose the little freedom they have. Now there is at least a certain amount of freedom, and quite a few who have a tolerable existence. Can you explain why Communistic states have barbed wire and police dogs along the boundaries, and why people still take the risk and desert to the west?"

"That is only propaganda lies," answered Shavaneshan coldly. "You belong to the American imperialistic camp. And now we have heard enough from you. We have work to do here."

Shavaneshan had a feeling that the discussion was not good for Philemon.

Now Örn turned his back resolutely toward the Indian, and spoke directly to the boy. He talked in the Zulu language so that Shavaneshan would not be able to understand.

"Philemon, my boy, have I ever done anything to hurt you? Have I not tried to help you? Do you believe me now, when I tell you that you learn wrong

things here, and that it is best for you to come home with me?"

"Yes, umfundisi," answered Philemon feebly.

It was not easy to contradict Örn. He could be so intensive and direct and penetrating.

"Are you coming with me now, then? I have the car outside. You can get work with us at Edwaleni."

Philemon was not especially inclined to do this. But it was hard to resist Örn.

"But I am hired here. There will be trouble if I just leave like that!"

"Don't be anxious about that, my boy. I will take care of that."

Örn turned to Shavaneshan and changed to English again.

"I am taking the boy with me. He is quitting right away."

"You have apparently no idea of the law," answered Shavaneshan. "You have to give a month's notice. And you have no right to force your way in here, and drag our employees away. And after all, Zondi here is a party member, and he won't be duped."

"Do *you* talk about the law? You? Then just call the police. You can, of course, complain because I am taking the boy from the Communistic headquarters. That might prove not to be to your interest."

Philemon stood undecided. Everything that he had heard about the church's outrages and lackey service for the capitalists was dancing around in his head. But all of this seemed so unreal when he saw Örn. He did not know what was right. But here it was only a battle between two personalities, and Örn was the

stronger. In some way it sounded more right when he talked.

"Come, Philemon," said Örn calmly, and took him carefully by the arm. They went together toward the door. Shavaneshan remained standing without saying a word, and looked undecidedly after them.

Down in the courtyard Philemon stopped.

"Excuse me, umfundisi, I'll only run up the back way and get my things."

Örn gave a friendly nod.

"Well, run up. But if you are not here in five minutes, I'll come up and get you. I'll wait for you in the car out on the street."

Örn went and sat down behind the wheel, and looked abstractly around at the throng of Oriental people on the streets. He thought about the problem, Philemon. Was he already too much influenced by Communism? Or would he change his ideas again when he came under Hlongwane's influence? If he knew the boy rightly, it was not principles and attitudes, but rather his own selfish interests and a general appetite for life, which dominated him. He would probably change his ideas, but he needed a lot of rearing still, if he was going to be a good fellow. . . . It was perhaps a little daring to let him teach the youngsters in the primary grades. He could not teach religion anyway. But he could teach them to read and count.

There was going to be a lot of trouble on his account in the future, that was apparent. But there was Hlongwane, of course. . . .

A white man with a mustache and dark glasses had

walked around the car several times, and looked at the license plate. Now he came up to Örn and spoke to him through the open car window.

"May I have your name and address?" he said in a commanding tone.

Örn woke up from his thoughts.

"What," he said, "what is the trouble?"

The fellow took out his notebook and pen and stood waiting to write.

"I am from the police. You have been in at the Democratic Peace Congress which is suspected of Communistic tendencies."

Örn became troubled. This could be dangerous for the mission.

"Yes, you can have my name. Frederick Örn, missionary, from the Swedish Mission, Stoneville location. But I have nothing to do with the Communists. On the contrary, I have been there and persuaded a native boy to leave them."

The policeman wrote in his book, and spoke in an indifferent tone without looking at Örn.

"Yes, they all say that. They have nothing to do with the Communists."

"It is most extraordinary," said Örn angered. "The Communists think that I am a nationalist and the nationalists think that I am a Communist. Can't you believe that there is another way than these two? A missionary can neither be one or the other."

"There are red missionaries. You have the same ideas about the Negroes, don't you?"

"No, we don't. And listen to what I have to say: I am not at all in sympathy with the Communists."



The policeman shrugged his shoulders, and put away his book.

"The only fact in this case is that I have seen you go into their office. Good-by."

He turned around and went back to the sidewalk right across the street where he was apparently posted to observe the people who went in and out of the party office.

Örn followed him with a weary look.

This is just an eventful morning, he thought. Now we are apparently in bad favor in both camps.

Philemon came out through the gate with lingering steps, and carried a bundle of clothes under his arm. Mohammed Ibrahim walked beside him, talking eagerly and gesticulating.

Örn opened the car door and let Philemon in. Mohammed came up, stood beside the car and made a last attempt to get Philemon to stay, and continued to talk even after the car started to move. Örn did not look at him and not at the policeman either, but only drove on in silence, biting his lips. Not until he had gotten through the city, and was approaching Stoneville, did his disposition improve, so that he could get himself to talk.

"You have been out for a ride with me once before, Philemon. Do you remember?"

"Yes, indeed, that was when you met me when I had been whipped."

Örn struck a jovial note.

"Well, it apparently falls to my lot to drive you home each time that you have gotten into a scrape."

Philemon kept quiet. He did not think that he had



gotten into a scrape this time, and he began to regret that he had permitted himself to be dragged away. Stoneville and the old school at Edwaleni did not entice him.

Örn felt that his words had been a poor choice, and he tried another line.

"Your mother is waiting for you at home. It will be a pleasure to meet her, won't it?"

Philemon continued to be quiet. The outlook of being met with an admonition by Selina was even less inviting. He had a good mind to get out of the car, but it would be useless to ask Örn to stop.

Nothing more was said during the trip home.

It was a warm summer day, and several of the school classes at Edwaleni had moved out of the crowded classrooms to the coolness under the trees. On the grass in the shady side of the church sat a row of boys with slates. In the distance sounded the noise from the streets of Stoneville, but inside the mission station only occasional voices and the sighing of the summer breezes through treetops were heard. An old Negro with a mason's trowel and a pail of mortar stood mending cracks in the white wall which sheltered Edwaleni.

Philemon stood under a great oak, and taught a class of small boys arithmetic. His thin frame swayed back and forth. He seemed a little clumsy and uncertain, raised his voice and spoke shrilly, but he got along fairly well, and seemed interested in his job. He knew arithmetic, that was obvious. Now and then he

gave a nervous look at Hlongwane and Örn, who stood in the sun on the walk some distance away and watched him. They were talking quietly to one another.

"It isn't going so badly," said Örn. "He has got grit, that boy, that is sure."

"Yes, I have always said that. But he is sick in his soul from all that foolishness he has gotten from the Communists. He has asked me such peculiar things sometimes during these weeks—if I have noticed that you get money from America and so forth, and if it has been proved that Jesus never existed. Selina believes that he is completely lost."

"Hm. Well, now he has other things to think about. It will be necessary to keep him busy in his spare time, too, so that he gets on the right track gradually."

"Yes, that is all one can hope for."

Hlongwane smiled.

"Do you remember when he came? I was so sure that there was something remarkable about that boy. But I don't think that any longer now. He will never be any more than quite a good teacher at the most."

Örn nodded.

"Yes, I do remember that. But at any rate, he has been well cared for, at least he had been rescued, first from the location, and then from the Communists. And when a person is rescued, that is remarkable enough."

They stood and looked at Philemon a while longer. Then they turned around and walked away calmly and confidently together.











